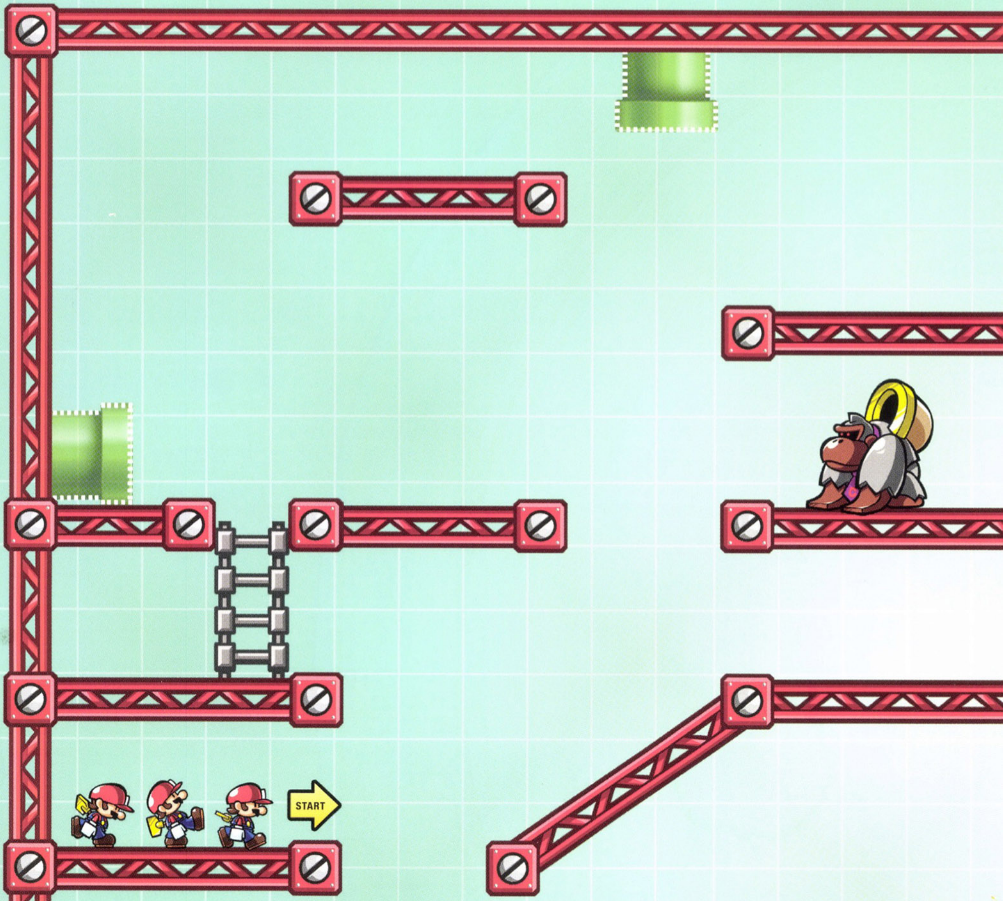
NINTENDO POWER

Mario Sports Mix • Monster Tale • Super Mario All-Stars • Lost in Shadow • Radiant Historia • Epic Mickey • Kingdom Hearts Re:coded • de Blob 2 • Okamiden

263
JANUARY 2011
SUBSCRIBER EDITION



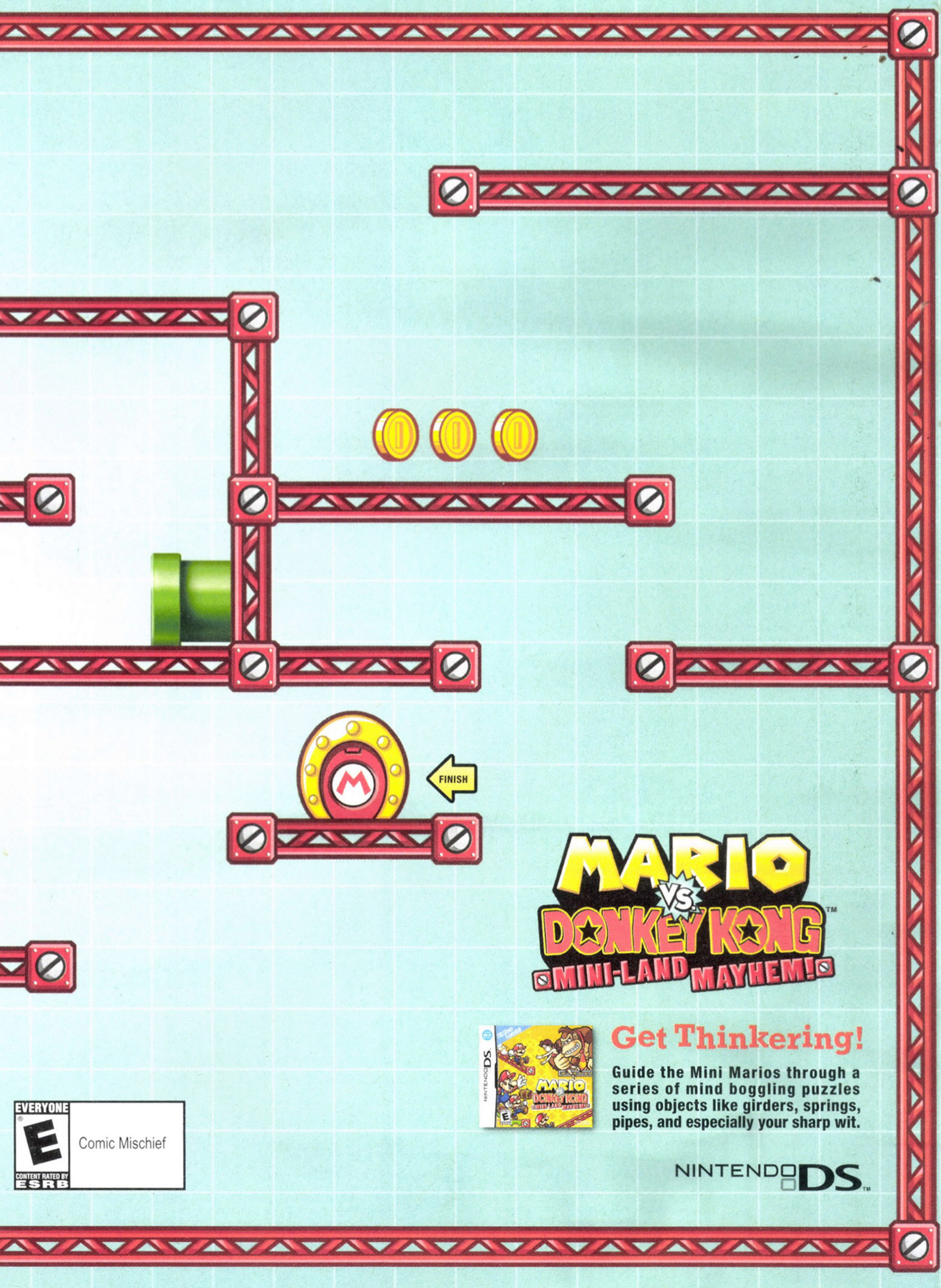
CAN YOU SOLVE THIS PUZZLE?

Using only 3 girders and 1 warp pipe, can you create a safe path for the Mini Marios to march to the exit door? Draw girders in the gaps and a warp pipe in one of the two designated spaces. Once the Mini Marios start marching, they don't stop - so plan carefully. Watch out for the Capture Kong!

x3 You can use girders to bridge gaps - simply connect a girder between two girder rivets. You can even place them diagonally.	x1 Warp pipes transport your Mini Marios to the other Warp Pipe on the level.

SEE THE PUZZLE AND FIND THE SOLUTION AT **MARIOVSDK.NINTENDO.COM**

© 2010 Nintendo. Nintendo properties are trademarks of Nintendo.


FINISH
MARIO VS. DONKEY KONG™ MINI-LAND MAYHEM!
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Comic Mischief

Get Thinkering!

Guide the Mini Marios through a series of mind boggling puzzles using objects like girders, springs, pipes, and especially your sharp wit.

NINTENDO DS™

NINTENDO POWER

CONTENTS • JANUARY 2011

FEATURES

Four-Sport Hero 38

It's not just sports—it's sport done the Mario way! Mario Sports Mix brings basketball, hockey, volleyball, and dodgeball to Wii like you've never seen before. Go Team Mustache!

A Tale of Two Genres 48

Adventure-meets-virtual-pet game Monster Tale is set to be one of the must-play DS titles of 2011. Dig into loads of new info and an in-depth interview.

Resolution Revolution 56

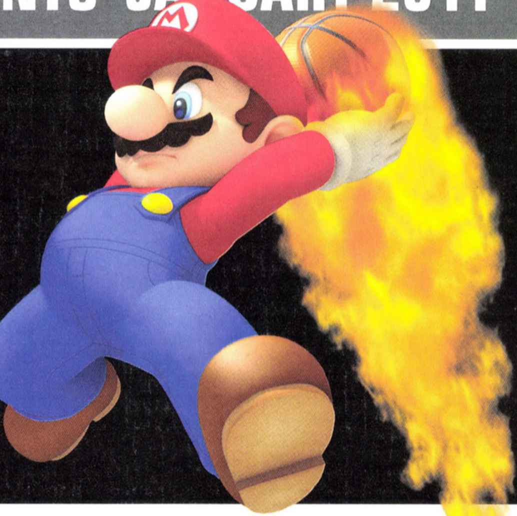
What resolutions might video game characters make to usher in the new year? Here are our guesses.

History in the Remaking 60

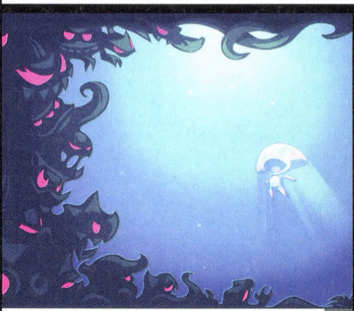
Radiant Historia—the next big DS RPG—lets you alter the flow of time itself. Get all the juicy details here!

Nintendo Power Awards 2010 Nominations 66

It's time once again to recognize the best that video gaming has to offer. Check out the nominees, then get online and vote!



MARIO SPORTS MIX 38



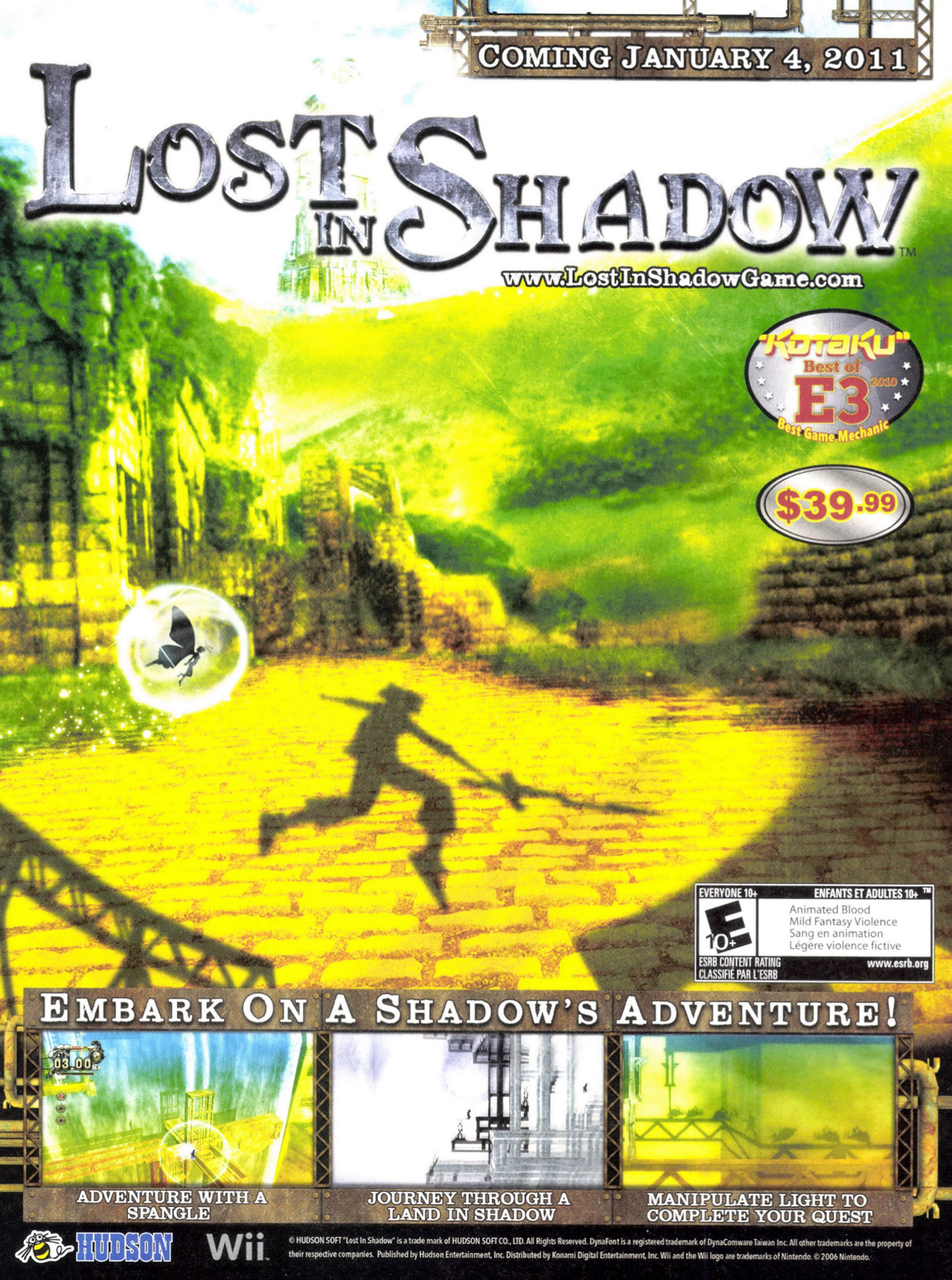
MONSTER TALE 48

RESOLUTION REVOLUTION 56

RADIANT HISTORIA 60

★★★ NINTENDO POWER ★★★
AWARDS
2010
NOMINATIONS

NINTENDO POWER AWARDS 2010 NOMINEES 66



COMING JANUARY 4, 2011

LOST IN SHADOW™

www.LostInShadowGame.com

"KOTAKU" Best of E3 2010 Best Game Mechanic

$39.99

EVERYONE 10+ ENFANTS ET ADULTES 10+™
E 10+
Animated Blood
Mild Fantasy Violence
Sang en animation
Légère violence fictive
ESRB CONTENT RATING CLASSIFIÉ PAR L'ESRB
www.esrb.org

EMBARK ON A SHADOW'S ADVENTURE!

ADVENTURE WITH A SPANGLE

JOURNEY THROUGH A LAND IN SHADOW

MANIPULATE LIGHT TO COMPLETE YOUR QUEST

HUDSON Wii

© HUDSON SOFT "Lost In Shadow" is a trade mark of HUDSON SOFT CO., LTD. All Rights Reserved. DynaFont is a registered trademark of DynaComware Taiwan Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies. Published by Hudson Entertainment, Inc. Distributed by Konami Digital Entertainment, Inc. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo.

CONTENTS • JANUARY 2011

DEPARTMENTS

Pulse 6

Power Up 10

Download 22

Previews 30
- ATV Wild Ride 37
- Captain America: Super Soldier (Wii) 32
- Conduit 2 36
- de Blob 2 (Wii, DS) 30
- Okamiden 34

Power Profiles 76

Playback 80

Reviews 81
- Epic Mickey 88
- Ghost Trick: Phantom Detective 86
- Kingdom Hearts Re:coded 82
- Lost in Shadow 89
- Super Mario All-Stars 84
- TRON: Evolution 85
- TRON: Evolution–Battle Grids 85

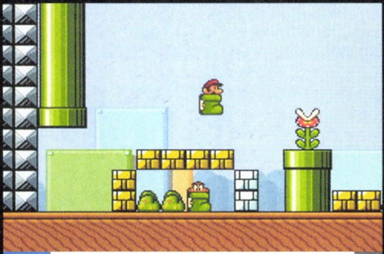
Community 92

Next Month 96

POWER UP THOR: THE VIDEO GAME 12

DOWNLOAD PROTOCOL 22

PREVIEW DE BLOB 2 30



REVIEW SUPER MARIO ALL-STARS 84

GAME INDEX

21: Blackjack (DW) 27
Adventure in Vegas: Slot Machine (DW) 27
ATV Wild Ride (DS) 37
Bit.Trip Fate (WW) 26
Captain America: Super Soldier (Wii) 32
Cave Story (DW) 24,28
Cave Story (WW) 24
Conduit 2 (Wii) 36
de Blob 2 (Wii, DS) 30
Derby Dogs (WW) 26
Epic Mickey (Wii) 88
Fluidity (WW) 26
Gene Labs (WW, DW) 27
Ghost Trick: Phantom Detective (DS) 86
Go Fetch! (DW) 28
GO Series Defense Wars (DW) 28
GO Series Pinball Attack! (DW) 28
Go! Go! Island Rescue! (DW) 27
Gods vs. Humans (WW) 26
Golden Sun: Dark Dawn (DS) 14
Jimmie Johnson Racing: Anything with an Engine (Wii) 12
Kingdom Hearts Re:coded (DS) 82
LEGO Pirates of the Caribbean: The Video Game (Wii, DS) 12
Lost in Shadow (Wii) 89
Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga (GBA) 80
Mario Sports Mix (Wii) 38
Monster Tale (DS) 48
Need for Speed Nitro-X (DW) 28
Okamiden (DS) 34
Paul's Shooting Adventure (DW) 28
Peg Solitaire (DW) 28
Protocol (WW) 22
Radiant Historia (DS) 60
Robox (WW) 27
Snowpack Park (WW) 27
Spot the Difference (DW) 28
Street Slam (VC) 27
Super Mario All-Stars (Wii) 84
Thor: The Video Game (Wii, DS) 10
Triple Running Sports (WW) 27
TRON: Evolution (DS) 85
TRON: Evolution–Battle Grids (Wii) 85

DS = NINTENDO DS
DW = DSiWARE
GBA = GAME BOY ADVANCE
VC = VIRTUAL CONSOLE
Wii = Wii
WW = WiiWARE

POWER UP 🟥
DOWNLOAD 🟦
PREVIEW ⬛
FEATURE ⬜
PLAYBACK 🟨
REVIEW 🟦

YOU FOUND THE OCARINA!

SWEET POTATO OCARINA $44.95

6 holes (2 thumbhole, octave +2), includes Songbook/Tutorial/Serenades, Lullabies, Minuets

DRAGONTOOTH OCARINA $99.95

12 Hole Ocarina with metallic lustre glaze.
Comes with display stand, Songbook Tutorial,
metal chain, Origin Myth with original songs

DRAGONTOOTH

SPEARHEAD OCARINA $19.95

6 Holes with 2 thumbholes (octave +3)
Comes as a beaded necklace
and Songbook/Tutorial

Plenty of other ocarina styles, songbooks, holsters, carrying cases, video tutorials and demos at www.songbirdocarina.com

SHIPPING INFO

Shipping & Handling $6 - $8 (1 - 2 weeks for delivery)
PRIORITY Shipping $12 -$14 (2-5 biz days for delivery)
We also ship FedEx for super fast delivery

Order via our Website or call Toll Free: 1-866-899-4046

Sweet Potato Ocarina

- Easy To Play
- Ceramic Flute
- Songbook/Tutorial Included
- Minuets, Serenades, Requiems
- Handmade in U.S.A.

Songbird Ocarinas

2751 East 11th St. Los Angeles, CA 90023
www.songbirdocarina.com

Songbird Ocarinas is not affiliated with or endorsed by Nintendo of America, Inc.

Pulse

How Will You Remember 2011?

Chris Slate

The start of a new year is an amazing time for fans of video games, when big holiday titles are still warm in our systems and another year's worth of amazing games are right around the corner. I'm not a very patient person, so it's a relief to know that I'm finally in the year that will see the release of The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword, the next big evolution of the Pokémon phenomenon with Pokémon Black Version and Pokémon White Version, and the long-awaited introduction of mass-market 3D gaming with the Nintendo 3DS handheld. These are launches that would be the high point of any year, and together they could turn 2011 into a landmark period for Nintendo fans. As always, the Nintendo Power team will be here all year long to do the, um, hard work of testing new games for you. No, don't thank us—the smiles on your faces (and the free games we get in the mail) are thanks enough. Happy new year!

CHRIS SLATE **EDITOR IN CHIEF**

Wii
GREAT APE!
NINTENDO POWER
BIG REVIEWS!
OKAMIDEN
KINGDOM HEARTS

V262 HOLIDAY 2010

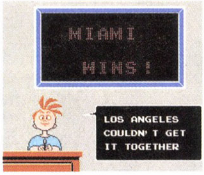
Chris Slate here, back once again to answer your letters while playing dodgeball with a plumber and an ape. But first, this month's special letter request: what is your video game New Year's resolution? Send your responses to the address on page 8, and we'll print the best ones!

LETTERS

Cool Cameo

I downloaded NES Play Action Football on the Virtual Console and noticed that, during the game, Nester is behind the news table! Me being a Nester fan, I thought this was very cool! Nester has always been one of my favorite comic characters, but I never knew that he was in any game but Nester's Funky Bowling (which I wish was on the Virtual Console). One day I hope to see a game called Epic Mario where—just as Mickey has to face Oswald, a forgotten Disney character, in Epic Mickey—Mario would meet Nester in the wasteland. —**C. ROBINSON**

Good catch! Yes, Nester does indeed have a cameo in NES Play Action Football, which predated Nester's Funky Bowling and stands as his debut video game appearance. And I love your idea for Epic Mario; any plan to put our old pal Nester back to work is fine by me.



Nester's walk-on appearance led to a starring role.

Epic Win

After I read your article on *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World*, I made the final decision to buy it and, wow—best movie ever! I almost had an accident at the beginning when they played the music from The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past. And the dream sequence that had the fairy fountain music in the background? *Sigh.* Thanks for getting me to watch the most epic movie of epicness ever. —**LOZFREAK89**

Classic Comeback

I noticed a big increase in Mega Man fans and wondered what was behind it. I did a little research and found out that, with the release of Mega Man 9 and 10, people have seen the light and are glad Mega Man was taken back to his 8-bit roots. No offense to anyone who likes the newer Mega Man games, but they sicken me. I prefer the old games, and many others agree with me. —**MATT S.**

I think the success of Mega Man 9 and 10 shows us that a video game franchise can be different things to different audiences. For instance, both the Mario and Sonic series now offer ongoing 2D adventures in addition to fresh polygonal installments. Great gameplay concepts never really die, even if they do go out of style for a while.

As a Mario maniac who didn't start playing games until his brother gave him an old N64, I'm thrilled to see Super Mario All-Stars come back on Wii. I've played through the original versions of these games on Virtual Console, but thanks to the upgraded All-Star graphics, I feel like I'm about to get a fresh experience all over again. **—NICK W.**

MARIO'S MAGIC MOMENTS

Better or Worse?

What gives? The original Scribblenauts got a 9, but Super Scribblenauts gets an 8.5?! Your review said that the sequel was better, yet it gets a lower score?! **—KNUXSOUL**

I was excited to see what you rated Super Scribblenauts, but disappointed to find that its score was lower than the original game. I don't understand why—with the awesome arcade mini-game, adjectives, and better controls—you would think it's worse than the original. Super Scribblenauts does have fewer levels, but what's there is fun and exciting. Maybe something bad happened with your experience? **—SUPERSCRIBBLER**

I understand why you might be confused. One of the hardest things to explain about game scores is that their value changes over time. Since the gaming world is always advancing and the bar is constantly being raised, a title that came out a while ago probably wouldn't be as well received if it was introduced today. The original Scribblenauts entered a world that had never seen anything like it, but by now the novelty of the concept has lost a lot of its oomph. Super Scribblenauts is still great fun, but without major new advances, even the best ideas lose a little luster the more we get used to them.

Miss the Party?

While reading the Game Changers article in Vol. 261, I kept waiting for a particular game to appear, but it never did and I don't understand why it didn't make the cut: Mario Party! Mario Party's concept of countless mini-games has to be one of the most influential ideas I have ever seen. Think of the many mini-game collections that have come since—Wii Party, the WarioWare series, and the Raving Rabbids games, just to name a few. Mini-games will be around forever. **—DREW**

Old-School DK

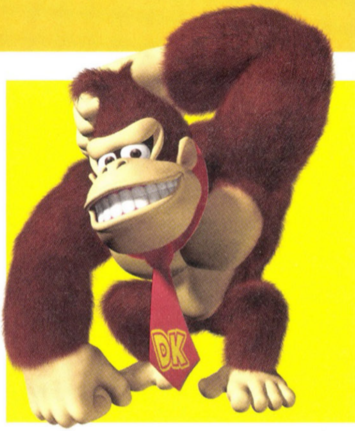
O wise ones of Nintendo Power, lend me thine ears. I've been playing the original Donkey Kong Country to get pumped for the new Donkey Kong Country Returns, and while I was playing I thought it would be cool if Cranky Kong got his own game. It could feature Cranky 30 years ago when he was as buff as DK, everything would be in black and white, and Donkey Kong could be a baby gorilla in a diaper. **—MR. LUNCHBOX**

Even though Super Scribblenauts isn't a revolution like its predecessor, the sequel is still one of 2010's very best Nintendo DS games.

DON'T HASSLE THE HOFF

Hey! Hoffman! When my brother Zach got to the part in Metroid: Other M where Ridley attacks Samus and the space marines in Sector 1, our Wii turned off! Zach thinks it just got disconnected for a second, but I know the real story: Ridley forced our Wii to turn off so he could escape to the real world! Now I'm afraid that he's flying around Yuba City, my hometown! You're the only dude bad enough to help me out! What do I do?! **—EVAN W.**

The Hoff says: Evan, I think you're onto something. I, too, experienced an electrical problem in my apartment right after reaching that scene in Metroid: Other M. Clearly there's some sort of conspiracy going on. Mother Brain has probably already set up an underground lair beneath Sacramento, where she's breeding an army of cybernetically enhanced Space Pirates. Kraid might be roaming beneath the Pacific right now! But c'mon—Ridley flying through Yuba City? Now you're just being silly. Obviously he'd attack Seattle first.



I've always wanted to ask Donkey Kong why his name is Donkey. He's clearly not a donkey, as anyone can see. —**RACHEL B.**

If you could ask a Nintendo character a question, what would it be?

I would ask Link how he's able to store a Clawshot, bombs, a bow, and much more in his pockets. —**BULLDOG M.**

I would ask Birdo what gender he/she is. That is something that needs to be asked! —**THE CUP OF GRAPE GUICE**

I would ask Mario why he is still in the plumbing business. After so many adventures, you'd think that he'd be a private investigator or a public speaker. But then again, maybe he couldn't change his profession that easily in today's economy. —**ZERO THE HERO**

I would ask the Elite Beat Agents if they could cheer me on at school. Or, of course, I could just yell "HEEEAAALP!" —**BRETT P.**

I would ask Bowser how I could join his army as an officer, because sending Koopas to their deaths at the hands of a short, obese plumber sounds like fun. Would that mean I have to be a boss, though? Because I think that Mario would make quick work of me. —**(NO NAME GIVEN)**

I'd ask Luigi how he felt about millions of people reading his diary from Paper Mario. —**THE ALMIGHTY QAZ**

I'd ask Wario how he got so hefty when his diet is mostly garlic. Isn't the stuff supposed to benefit your health? —**DONUTEATER**

Dear Mr. Goomba, I envy your ability to never give up after being stomped on, knocked by a shell, and hit by a fireball. I also respect that you always try new things such as baseball and space exploration. In fact, you seem to plop your way into almost every Mario game! My question for you is, how do you do all of these magnificent things with no arms? —**DREW**

If I could ask any Nintendo character a question, I would ask Samus Aran out on a date. —**TOM NOOK**

I would love to ask Ganondorf why he waits for Link to come to him, fully armed and at maximum health, instead of stopping him when he is weak. Wouldn't it be easier to defeat Link early on? —**FOSTYTHESNOWMAN**

I would ask Bowser why he always kidnaps Princess Peach. I mean, *come on*. We all want to know why he continually takes her after being foiled time and time again by Mario. Why does it have to be Peach? Does he love her? He hasn't captured Daisy that many times. And another thing is, why doesn't he hide Peach away somewhere instead of telling everyone that he's got her? Bowser definitely isn't the brightest villain ever. —**KYLE E.**

I would ask Mario if he ever gets tired of saving Princess Peach from Bowser over and over again, and if so, why he keeps doing it. I mean, if I had to spend all of my time stomping on Goombas and Koopa Troopas just to be told that the princess is in another castle, I'd give up! —**GUMGUMLUFFY**

I would just like to ask any of my favorite video game characters this one question: "Can I join you on your quest?" It would be freaking awesome to adventure alongside Link, Mario, Samus, Fox McCloud, Crono, and Mega Man! —**(NO NAME GIVEN)**

PLEASE WRITE US

pulse@nintendopower.com

OR VIA CARRIER PIGEON AT

Nintendo Power/Pulse
c/o Future US
4000 Shoreline Court, Ste. 400
South San Francisco, CA 94080

TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR LETTER PUBLISHED:

Understand that the magazine staff is separate from Nintendo; we don't make the games.

Don't send links to game coverage on the Web—trust us; we see it all.

Don't ask about the status of upcoming games, or whether certain games will be announced; if we have that info, we'll always tell you.

NINTENDO POWER

TEAM MUSTACHE

EDITOR IN CHIEF **Chris Slate**
EXECUTIVE EDITOR **Steve Thomason**
SENIOR EDITOR **Chris Hoffman**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR **Justin Cheng**
ART DIRECTOR **John Seeger Gilman**
CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER **Rebekah Lane**
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS **Patrick Cunningham, Andrew Hayward, Casey Loe, Nathan Meunier, Dean Royals, David Smith, Phil Theobald**
COPY EDITOR **Candace Cunningham**
INTERNS **Cody Martin, David Murphy**
LICENSING MANAGER **Frances Wall Jha**

BUSINESS
VICE PRESIDENT—GAMES **Kelley Corten - 650.745.9225**
VP OF SALES AND MARKETING **Rachelle Considine – rconsidine@futureus.com - 650.238.2505**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INTEGRATED SALES **Nate Hunt – nhunt@futureus.com - 415.269.5408**
REGIONAL SALES DIRECTOR **Isaac Ugay – iugay@futureus.com - 949.305.0767**
REGIONAL SALES MANAGER **Rachel Campos – rcampos@futureus.com - 650.745.9207**
ACCOUNT MANAGER **Arthur St. Germain - astgermain@futureus.com - 650.238.2571**
DETROIT CONSUMER MANAGER **Alan Dickinson – alandmedia@comcast.net - 248.792.2408**
ADVERTISING COORDINATOR **Heidi Hapin – hhapin@futureus.com**
SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER **Andrea Recio-Ang – arecio-ang@futureus.com**
MARKETING COORDINATOR **Allyson Kardel – akardel@futureus.com**

PRODUCTION
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR **Michael Hollister**
PRODUCTION MANAGER **Larry Briseno**
PRINT ORDER COORDINATOR **Jennifer Lim**

CONSUMER MARKETING
VICE PRESIDENT CONSUMER MARKETING **Rich McCarthy**
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR **Crystal Hudson**
NEWSSTAND DIRECTOR **Bill Shewey**
CONSUMER MARKETING OPERATIONS DIRECTOR **Lisa Radler**
RENEWAL & BILLING MANAGER **Mike Hill**
BUSINESS MANAGER **Elliot Kiger**
SR. ONLINE CONSUMER MARKETING MANAGER **Jennifer Trinkner**
CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER **Mike Frassica**

FUTURE US, Inc.
4000 Shoreline Court,
Suite 400, South San
Francisco, CA 94080
www.futureus.com

PRESIDENT **John Marcom**
VP/CFO **John Sutton**
VP INTERNET DEVELOPMENT **Tyson Daugherty**
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR MUSIC **Brad Tolinski**
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR TECHNOLOGY & LIVING **Jon Phillips**
CREATIVE DIRECTOR **Chris Imlay**
GENERAL COUNSEL **Anne Ortel**
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR **Nancy Durlester DuBois**

FUTURE PLC
30 Monmouth St., Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW, England
www.futureplc.com
Tel +44 1225 442244
www.futureplc.com

NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN: Roger Parry.
CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Stevie Spring
GROUP FINANCE DIRECTOR: John Bowman

Nintendo Power Customer Care
P.O. Box 5770
Harlan, IA 51593-1270
1-866-941-8368
For Subscription Problems Only!
nintendopower@cdsfulfillment.com.
http://service.futureus-inc.com/
REPRINTS: For reprints, contact Reprint Management Services, 717.399.1900 ext. 100

Game trademarks and copyrights are property of their respective owners. TM, ®, the Nintendo DS logo and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2011 Nintendo.

ISSN: 1041-9551

What Nintendo fans think, want, and do

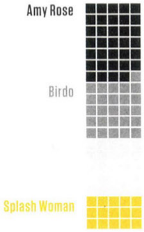
The SCORE

WEIGH IN ON NEXT MONTH'S TOPICS AT WWW.NINTENDOPOWER.COM/POLLS.

8 OUT OF 10

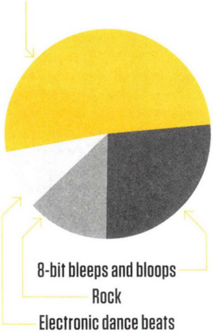
OF YOU HAVE STABBED A FRIEND IN THE BACK IN CO-OP.

IF FALCO DATED AMY ROSE, MAYBE HE WOULDN'T BE SO GRUMPY.

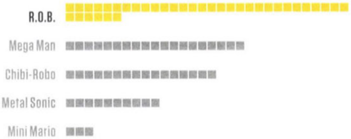


Which style of video game music do you prefer?

FULLY ORCHESTRATED



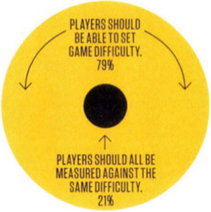
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ROBOTS WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO HELP OUT AROUND THE HOUSE?



DR. MARIO

IS THE DOCTOR YOU WOULD TRUST TO TREAT YOU.

Dr. Mario 78%
Dr. Light 12%
Dr. Robotnik 8%
Dr. Crygor 2%

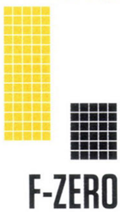


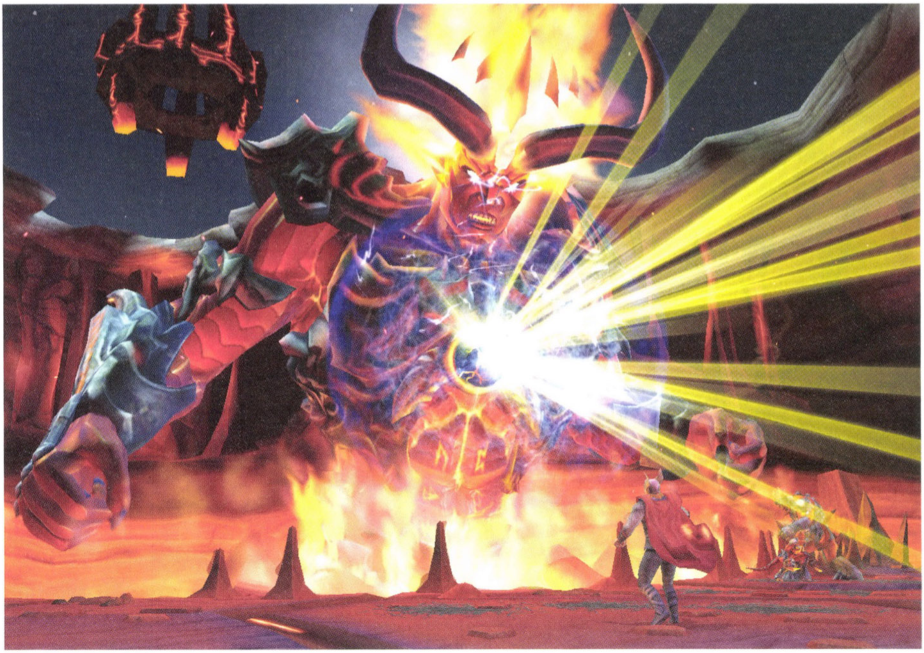
SEQUELS 77%

ARE BETTER THAN

PREQUELS 23%

WHICH STYLE OF RACING SHOULD BE MADE REAL?





Hammer Time

Marvel's god of thunder storms onto Wii in an exclusive **Thor** title from the makers of Mushroom Men and Ghostbusters: The Video Game.

WITH KENNETH BRANAGH'S *Thor* movie set to hit theaters in May, it should come as no surprise that the Odinson will make his solo video game debut at around the same time. Sega has tapped experienced Wii developer Red Fly to ready an exclusive offering for Nintendo's console, with its own unique story and gameplay. According to Red Fly producer Chad Barron, the game will be an action-brawler that revolves heavily around Mjöllnir, Thor's legendary hammer. "In fact, it's almost more about the hammer than it is about Thor," admits Barron. As players progress through the game, for example, they'll be able to customize Mjöllnir via upgrades in three different categories—storm, valor, and might. Barron says his team experimented with about 10 different control schemes for wielding the weapon, but ultimately decided that too much motion control would prove tiring in a beat-'em-up. So simple button presses will execute all of your standard attacks, while gestures are reserved for over-the-top special moves.

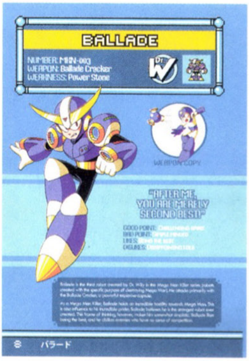
In terms of aesthetics and narrative, the game will draw on both the movie and comic books. Barron mentions that epic boss battles will feature some of Thor's all-time greatest adversaries (including Surtur, as shown above), and that players will be able to unlock costumes from throughout the different eras of the comic. No word on whether Beta Ray Bill will make an appearance.

A version of Thor for the Nintendo DS system is also in the works, courtesy of WayForward (Contra 4, Shantae). We'll have more on both incarnations of the game in the coming months. **—STEVE T.**

MEGAMAN™

ROBOT MASTER
FIELD GUIDE

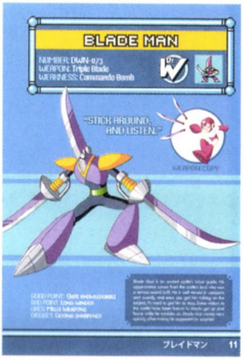
UDON
CAPCOM



BALLADE

NUMBER: MKN-003
WEAPON: Ballade Cracker
WEAKNESS: Power Stone

"AFTER ME, YOU ARE MERELY SECOND BEST!"



BLADE MAN

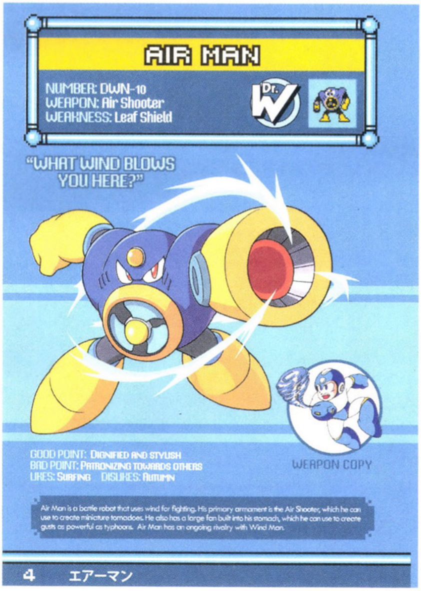
NUMBER: DWN-073
WEAPON: Triple Blade
WEAKNESS: Commando Bomb

"STICK AROUND, AND LISTEN."

Robots, Robots Everywhere

Learn everything you need to know about the Blue Bomber's friends and foes in the upcoming Mega Man: Robot Master Field Guide book.

[Below] Thanks to the Mega Man: Robot Master Field Guide you'll learn valuable facts such as Air Man's likes, dislikes, and favorite quote (although we wonder how he says it since he doesn't have a mouth).



AIR MAN

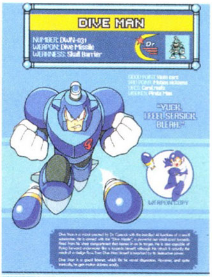
NUMBER: DWN-10
WEAPON: Air Shooter
WEAKNESS: Leaf Shield

"WHAT WIND BLOWS YOU HERE?"

GOOD POINT: Dignified and stylish
BAD POINT: Patronizing towards others
LIKES: Surfing DISLIKES: Autumn

Air Man is a battle robot that uses wind for fighting. His primary armament is the Air Shooter, which he can use to create miniature tornadoes. He also has a large fan built into his stomach, which he can use to create gusts as powerful as typhoons. Air Man has an ongoing rivalry with Wind Man.

YOU'RE RUNNING through one of Dr. Wily's heavily armed lairs, leaping over deadly spikes, dodging laser beams, and blasting mindless robotic animals with your arm cannon. Eventually you reach a set of doors (which you jump through, of course) and come face to face with an evil Robot Master. But which one is it? Fire Man? Flame Man? Heat Man? Magma Man? Solar Man? If you've ever found (or imagined) yourself in such a scenario, UDON Entertainment has just the book for you: the Mega Man: Robot Master Field Guide. Featuring more than 100 pages of Mega Man goodness, the volume contains artwork and information on the robot bosses from virtually every game in the main-line Mega Man series (including all the NES, Game Boy, and WiiWare installments), as well as info on allies such as Proto Man and Roll. From characters' histories to their strengths and weaknesses, it's all here. The book is tentatively scheduled for release in March 2011. —**CHRIS H.**



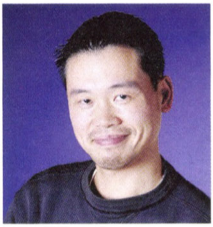
DIVE MAN

NUMBER: DWN-031
WEAPON: Dive Missile
WEAKNESS: Skull Barrier

"YUCK. I FEEL SEASICK. BLEAH."

Inafune Steps Down

The father of Mega Man, Keiji Inafune, departs Capcom.



ON OCTOBER 29, 2010, Keiji Inafune, Capcom's global head of production, announced that he would be leaving the company after 23 years. Inafune began his career at Capcom working as a graphic and character designer (where he would be credited under the pseudonym Inafking) on NES games including DuckTales, Chip 'n Dale Rescue Rangers, and—most famously—the Mega Man series. More recently, he was the brains behind such titles as Lost Planet and Dead Rising. In an interview with the Japanese website 4Gamer.net, Inafune explained that his departure from Capcom will allow his creative spirit to expand, letting him not only develop new games, but perhaps novels and movies as well. Mega Man fans might be concerned about what Inafune's absence will mean for the upcoming Nintendo 3DS handheld game Mega Man Legends 3, which he heavily championed. When asked about the title, Inafune explained that the game's team is already in place and work is well underway. Capcom has confirmed that development will continue. We at Nintendo Power wish Inafune luck on his next project, whatever it may be. —PHIL T.

Yo Ho! A LEGO Life for Me!

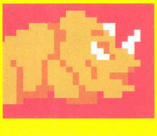
Following in the square footsteps of Batman, Indiana Jones, and Anakin Skywalker, LEGO Pirates of the Caribbean: The Video Game will bring all of your favorite swashbuckling heroes to Wii in glorious LEGO goodness. Set to be released alongside Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides in May, the game will cover the events of that film, as well as all of Jack Sparrows's previous adventures. —DAVID M.

Dumpster Driving

Anyone who likes their kart racing games outrageous and absurd, take note: NASCAR great Jimmie Johnson is partnering with Def Jam Rapstar publisher, Autumn Games, and developer Isopod Labs (of Vigilante 8: Arcade) to create Jimmie Johnson Racing: Anything with an Engine for Wii. As the title suggests, players will careen through over-the-top tracks on makeshift karts fashioned from unlikely objects, such as dumpsters and lawnmowers. Look for this one sometime in 2011. —PATRICK C.

A WINNER IS...

A certain mouse starring in two highly rated games.



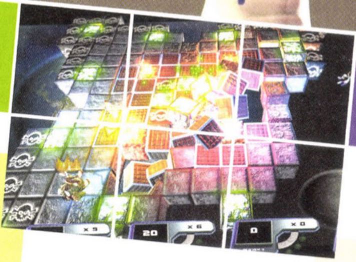
DODONGO DISLIKES...

Fools that call Sonic the Blue Bomber.

GET IN THE GAME

DigiPen Institute of Technology proudly presents a two-week summer workshop series for video game and technology enthusiasts in Grade 8 and beyond. These workshops are specially designed to introduce participants of all experience levels to the fundamentals of:

- **Video Game Programming**
- **3D Computer Animation**
- **Game Design**
- **Robotics**



Not yet in Grade 8?
ProjectFUN also offers Junior Workshops in both video game design and animation for students who are in Grades 5-7.

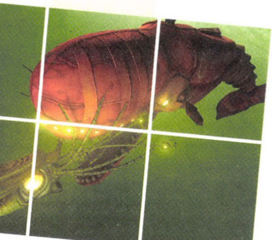
For more information, visit:
http://workshops.digipen.edu

GET $100 OFF*

Join us for Preview Day on Saturday, April 23, 2011.

Get a sneak peek at the workshops and $100 off!* For more information visit:
http://projectfun.digipen.edu/previewday

** Preview Day participants will receive a $100 coupon good toward any one Workshop tuition fee.*



DIGIPEN ProjectFUN WORKSHOPS

DigiPen INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

9931 Willows Road NE, Redmond, WA 98052
Phone: (425) 558-0299 • Toll-Free (866) 478-5236

After Dark

It's been more than seven years, but the latest chapter in the **Golden Sun** saga is finally a reality. Producer **Hiroyuki Takahashi** sheds some light on the long journey leading to **Dark Dawn's** release.

NINTENDO POWER Last time we chatted was about a year before Golden Sun: Dark Dawn had been announced, and you mentioned that you would really love to return to the series some day. How did it feel to finally get that opportunity?

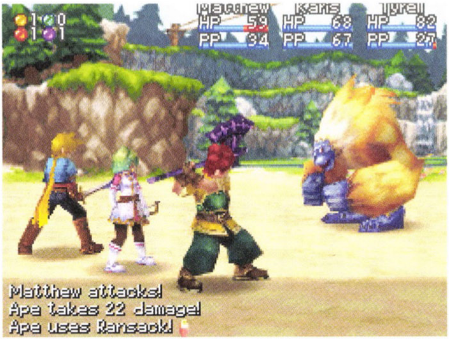
HIROYUKI TAKAHASHI To tell you the truth, we didn't have any concrete plans for a sequel at that point. We were really just excited to hear such passionate support for the series from everyone. Of course, we knew that there was a lot of demand for a Golden Sun sequel, but if the gaming media hadn't been pushing so hard for it back then, Dark Dawn might not have happened at all!

The opportunity to make a new Golden Sun reminded me just how hard it is to make RPGs. But when we finally did finish the arduous development process, it was tremendously satisfying. And I think we ended up with a game that will excite longtime fans and new players alike.

Why did you choose this specific timeframe—30 years after the events of the original titles?

The first two Golden Sun games shared a single continuous storyline, so most people assumed that particular story was the focus of the series. That assumption was so widespread that I couldn't help but to defy it! But at the same time, I was worried about what other sorts of stories would be possible in the Golden Sun series, and I was concerned that longtime fans might be disappointed if it looked like I was ignoring the previous chronology. After a great deal of stress and worry, I thought about having it take place in Vale 30 years later. And that was that. After the events of the previous games, it somehow seemed like the place the story wanted to go, and it would allow me to bring back a lot of beloved characters from the previous games.

In the previous Golden Sun, players broke the Seal of Alchemy, so I imagined they would be eager to see the consequences of that. And personally, I thought it would be interesting to show the various ways that would change the world. In the previous games, the concept of nations didn't really exist yet, but that was because civilization hadn't yet progressed to that point. In Dark Dawn players can witness the formation of nations, explore ruins that have been uncovered by the natural disasters that followed the "Golden Sun event," and so on, allowing them to experience the results of their previous actions firsthand. Our desire to show this new world to players of the previous games was the main reason we decided to set Dark Dawn 30 years in the future.



Matthew attacks!
Ape takes 22 damage!
Ape uses Ransack!

How long had this story been percolating in your minds? Did you start thinking about it as soon as you finished The Lost Age?

We had originally planned to return to Golden Sun after completing the Mario Tennis games for GameCube and Game Boy Advance, but obviously that didn't happen. The thing is, I love the world of Golden Sun. It's something that has been percolating in the back of my mind since way back, and as a fan of fantasy, it's become my sort of ideal fantasy world. But when the time [to make the next Golden Sun] rolled around, I was so burnt out. I had written so many RPGs that at the time I thought I may in fact have held the record as the world's most prolific RPG creator! For example, one of the projects I had been working on back then was a series of three RPGs with simultaneous, interconnected stories [Shining Force III Scenarios 1-3 for the Sega Saturn]. It used up pretty much every idea I had. I went from "I can't think about Golden Sun right now" to "I don't even *want* to think about Golden Sun." I probably could have pushed through it and forced myself to write it, but I doubt it would have turned out very good. So I closed the seal on that fantasy world for a while.

Why did you decide to switch from 2D visuals to fully polygonal graphics?

Camelot has worked on a lot of polygonal games, including Mario Golf and Mario Tennis, and has learned a great deal about working with 3D characters and environments. Both 2D and 3D have their own advantages, and I think that if something can be expressed in 2D, there's no reason not to. But we had good reason to switch to polygons, particularly in creating the game environments in Dark Dawn. As I'm sure you're aware, game areas and their individual puzzlelike gimmicks are an essential aspect of Golden Sun's gameplay experience. With the previous Golden Sun, I think we reached the limit of what we could express with 2D environments, and it was important to us to exceed that with Dark Dawn. By using polygons, we could make a single contiguous environment that contains all the rooms and hallways of an area, things that would be divided into separate chunks in a 2D environment. This makes the environments feel more real and intuitive to navigate, and players get lost much less frequently.

It's also a significant change to have real, solid objects in the environments. Picture a game area built around a giant statue; it has a completely different impact when you make it in 3D instead of 2D. And when you have 2D environments, you can't really do anything except have characters walk around on them. In 3D, the same polygonal environments and characters can be used to make spectacular event scenes. When players experience the game, I think they'll agree that the evolution to 3D makes for a significantly richer game world.

Though we still love them, turn-based battles are becoming something of a rarity in RPGs these days. Why did you decide to stick with them for Dark Dawn?

It's certainly true that the number of RPGs using real-time battle systems is increasing, and I can see how that might make turn-based battles seem old-fashioned in comparison. But I don't think that perception necessarily means that real-time battles are therefore superior, or more fun. Both systems have strengths and weaknesses.

Having to input commands may seem awkward, but players can input commands in Dark Dawn very quickly. In fact, they can input commands with a single tap if they use the touch-screen interface. Without the stress of having to select commands, the battle system can be quite enjoyable. Beyond that, I think the strength of turn-based battles is the number of options they can present to players. In a fantasy world, players want to be able to explore a variety of combat options, and I think turn-based battles are the best way to fulfill this; the number of things you can do in a real-time battle system is just too limited. I hope Golden Sun will allow players to experience the potential of a turn-based battle system.

Which returning characters were you most excited to revisit? And which of the new characters is your favorite?
There are quite a few returning characters to revisit! I would be quite happy if players felt the pangs of nostalgia upon meeting Golden Sun heroes Isaac and Garet at the beginning of the game. But more so than the major characters, I think serious fans of the series will be extremely happy about some of the supporting characters they meet.... But I shouldn't say anything more, so as not to spoil the experience.

If I had to pick a single favorite among the new characters, it would be Sveta. I'm a big fan of the demi-human species, and her particular role in the background to the story.

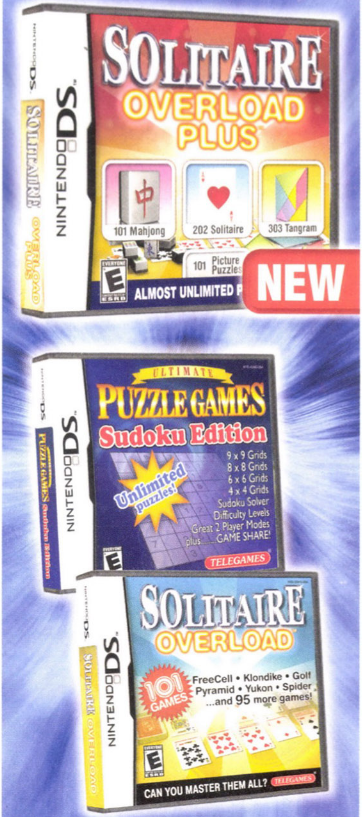
The idea that Weyard has been reshaped by all of these natural disasters allows returning players to feel a sense of exploration even though they've visited this world before. Was that sort of the impetus for that particular plot device?
We figured that if the force that ruled the world were to change, the consequences would have to be dramatic. The specific impetus of the "Golden Sun event" was actually a piece of concept art drawn by one of our illustrators. Our intent was to have sort of a biblical Genesis theme. In the previous game, players were tasked with restoring Weyard, a world that was being ruled by modern science, to its natural form. After accomplishing that, it seemed only natural that a cataclysmic disaster would follow! And naturally, the best way to have players experience the major changes that have befallen Weyard is to have them visit areas that they're already familiar with from previous games.

At this point, the Golden Sun universe has been fleshed out with quite a bit of detail. Have you had to create a series "bible" to help you keep track of everything?
As you say, the Golden Sun universe was almost completely established in the earlier games, and we needed some sort of guide to ensure that we didn't deviate from previously determined rules and history. Sometimes we turned to strategy guides, and we also got a lot of help from a Golden Sun fanatic who joined the company after the previous game's release. Working on this project reminded me how carefully one must tread when working with an established history and storyline!

Did fan feedback regarding the first two games affect your approach to development at all for Dark Dawn?
Of course we take fan feedback very seriously. However, we don't concern ourselves with speculation or suggestions about what should happen in the storyline. Formerly, when I was making that three-part serial RPG I mentioned earlier, there was a period after releasing the first game and while working on the second when I would regularly engage with fans on online services and such. At the time, I think I had a column in a monthly game magazine or something. Anyway, everyone was expressing their predictions about what would happen next, or opinions about what they would do if they were writing the next game, which is something that I hadn't been anticipating at all. And in a reverse sort of way, I did end up being influenced by that: I ended up cutting out the things that players were speculating or hoping for. I think the best stories are the ones that keep players in rapt suspense until the very end, because they can't possibly foresee what's coming next. I wanted to betray players' expectations, you know, in a *good* way.

However, we always do welcome feedback about game controls, combat mechanics, usability issues, and things like that. Please don't hesitate to let us know what you think!

Finally, if you were an Adept, what kind would you be?
That's a difficult choice. As a man, I'm drawn to the destructive power of fire, but the healing abilities of a Water Adept sound awfully appealing as well. Of course, I can't dismiss Earth, as psychokinesis was the first superpower I ever fell in love with. And the power of Wind Adepts does seem like the most spectacular power of them all. Hmmm, I have no idea.... Oh, there's also the demi-humans that make their debut in Golden Sun: Dark Dawn. They have a power that's new to the series, so I might pick that. But then again, I'm not sure that I'd want to be able to see and communicate with dead people. I'd see all sorts of things that I wouldn't want to see, and they'd be chattering at me constantly. So, um...hmmm.



Virtually Unlimited Entertainment

All Games Designed with VUE™ Technology

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

AVAILABLE AT

BEST BUY Thousands of Possibilities. Get Yours.
GameStop power to the players
amazon.com
TARGET

TELEGAMES®

Web site: www.telegames.com

STAR POWER

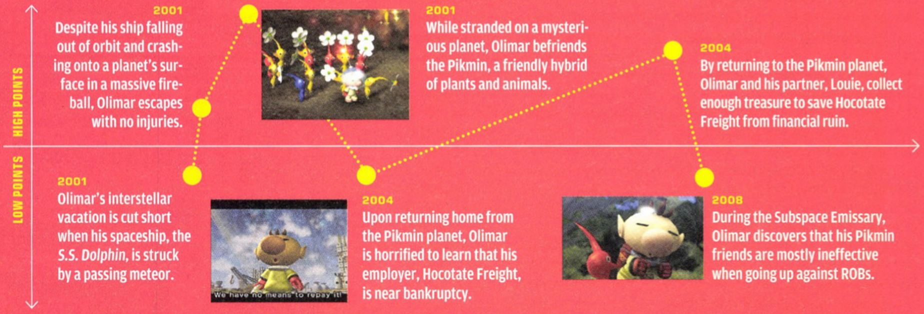
A closer look at the characters we love

FIRST APPEARANCE:
PIKMIN
GAMECUBE, 2001

Captain Olimar

He has traveled countless light-years through the universe on an epic quest to pick up stray bottle caps.

CAREER GRAPH



2001
Olimar's interstellar vacation is cut short when his spaceship, the *S.S. Dolphin*, is struck by a passing meteor.

2001
Despite his ship falling out of orbit and crashing onto a planet's surface in a massive fireball, Olimar escapes with no injuries.

2001
While stranded on a mysterious planet, Olimar befriends the Pikmin, a friendly hybrid of plants and animals.

2004
Upon returning home from the Pikmin planet, Olimar is horrified to learn that his employer, Hocotate Freight, is near bankruptcy.

2004
By returning to the Pikmin planet, Olimar and his partner, Louie, collect enough treasure to save Hocotate Freight from financial ruin.

2008
During the Subspace Emissary, Olimar discovers that his Pikmin friends are mostly ineffective when going up against ROBs.

OUR FAVORITE CAPTAIN OLIMAR GAMES

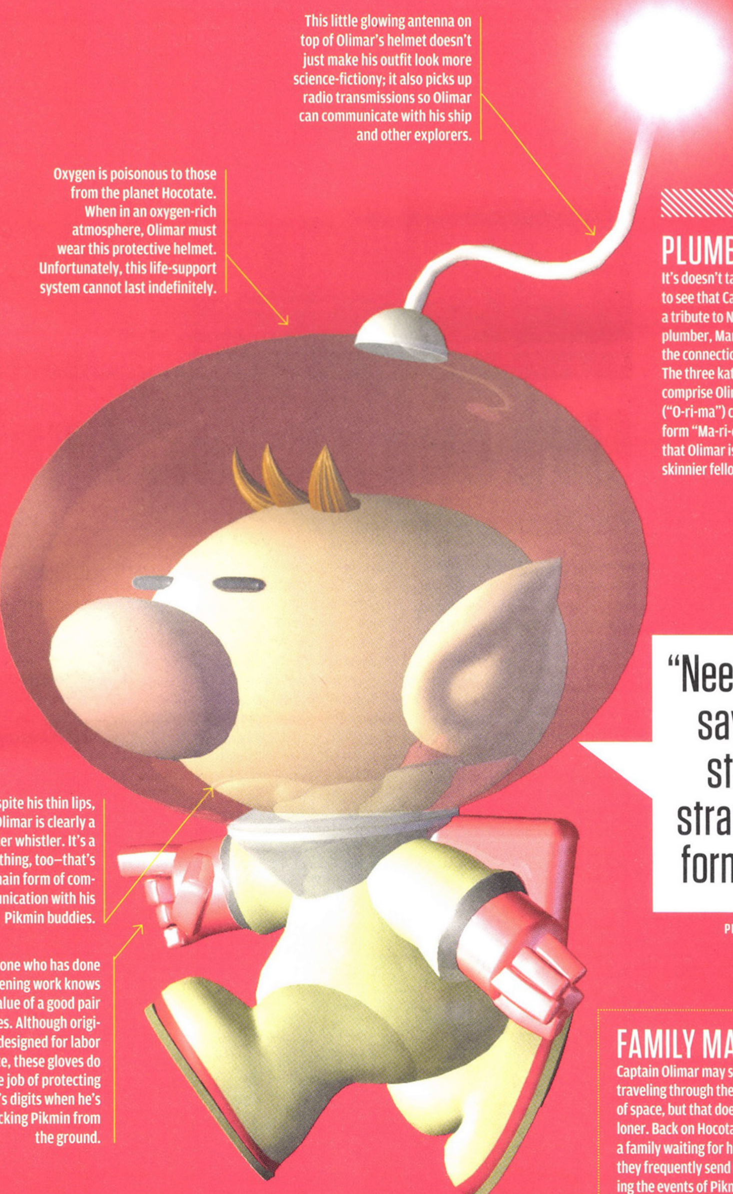
x 001 / 001
day 1

Pikmin
GAMECUBE, 2001
In Captain Olimar's first adventure, he crash-lands on a mysterious planet inhabited by the charming plant creatures that he dubs Pikmin. Together with his new friends, Olimar must collect the pieces of his broken ship so that he can return home. In 2009 an updated version of the game was released on Wii under the New Play Control! label.

Day 7
x 60 / 100 / 254

Pikmin 2
GAMECUBE, 2004
To help get his employer out of debt, Olimar and his partner, Louie, return to the Pikmin planet (which is heavily implied to be Earth) to collect "treasures" such as batteries, cookies, and lip balm. New types of Pikmin are on hand to carry the goods and to battle enemies.

Super Smash Bros. Brawl
Wii, 2008
On his own, Captain Olimar isn't a terribly effective fighter. Luckily, he's able to command up to six Pikmin at a time during brawls. The little guys make effective weapons, and they have different attacks depending on their color. With his Final Smash move, Olimar blasts off in his ship, leaving his opponents to be attacked by hungry Bulborbs, a common enemy on the Pikmin planet.



This little glowing antenna on top of Olimar's helmet doesn't just make his outfit look more science-fictiony; it also picks up radio transmissions so Olimar can communicate with his ship and other explorers.

Oxygen is poisonous to those from the planet Hocotate. When in an oxygen-rich atmosphere, Olimar must wear this protective helmet. Unfortunately, this life-support system cannot last indefinitely.

Despite his thin lips, Olimar is clearly a master whistler. It's a good thing, too—that's his main form of communication with his Pikmin buddies.

Anyone who has done gardening work knows the value of a good pair of gloves. Although originally designed for labor in space, these gloves do a fine job of protecting Olimar's digits when he's plucking Pikmin from the ground.

PLUMBING PIKMIN

It's doesn't take much imagination to see that Captain Olimar's name is a tribute to Nintendo's number-one plumber, Mario. In Japan, however, the connection is even more obvious. The three katakana characters that comprise Olimar's Japanese name ("O-ri-ma") can be rearranged to form "Ma-ri-o." What a coincidence that Olimar is friends with a taller, skinnier fellow named Louie.

> "Needless to say, I must study this strange life-form more."

PIKMIN, GAMECUBE, 2001

FAMILY MAN

Captain Olimar may spend a lot of time traveling through the lonely blackness of space, but that doesn't mean he's a loner. Back on Hocotate, the captain has a family waiting for him to return, and they frequently send him messages during the events of Pikmin 2. In addition to his wife, son, and daughter, Olimar has a pet named Bulbie.

POWER QUIZ

EASY

What are the yellow birdlike creatures in Final Fantasy called?

AVERAGE

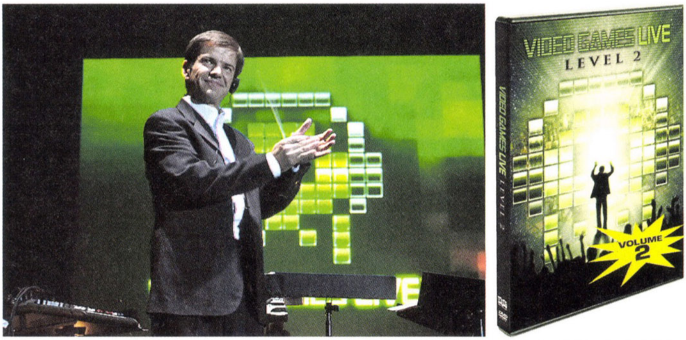
When Final Fantasy IV was released for the Super NES in North America, what was the game retitled?

HARDCORE

Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars features a secret boss inspired by Final Fantasy. What is that boss's name?

ANSWERS

EASY: Chocobos; AVERAGE: Final Fantasy II; HARDCORE: Culex



Whether in person or on DVD, the Video Games Live tour is well worth checking out.

Live and Kickin', Again

Video Games Live reaches Level 2.

VIDEO GAMES LIVE, the fan-adored concert tour based on the orchestral performance of video game music, is serving up a second helping of multimedia bliss, appropriately titled "Level 2." The sequel tour features music, video footage, and kinetic stage theatrics devoted to such classics as Super Mario Bros., The Legend of Zelda, and Sonic the Hedgehog, as well as recent fare such as Guitar Hero and God of War. A classic-arcade medley covers territory from Pong to Dragon's Lair.

Performed by the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra (with help from one hell of an AV team), an abbreviated version of the show is currently being aired on PBS. Additionally, CD, DVD, and Blu-Ray versions of the concert have been released to considerable sales and acclaim. The CD flavor includes 16 tracks (plus two, if you buy it in downloadable form), while the DVD and Blu-Ray iterations feature performances not included in the PBS special, as well as three hours of bonus material.

Of course, for the real-deal experience you'll have to pick up tickets for the concert itself. With over 70 tour dates planned for 2011 (see below), it's likely there will be a stop-over in your neck of the woods!

—PATRICK C.

UPCOMING TOUR DATES

December 17, 2010 - Paris, France • December 20, 2010 - St. Petersburg, Russia • **December 29, 2010 - Newark, NJ** • December 30, 2010 - Newark, NJ • **January 7, 2011 - Minneapolis, MN** • January 22, 2011 - Seattle, WA • **January 29, 2011 - Brookville, NY** • February 3, 2011 - Huntington, WV • **February 4, 2011 - Huntington, WV** • February 19, 2011 - Charlotte, NC • **February 26, 2011 - Bethesda, MD** • February 26, 2011 - Bethesda, MD • **March 4, 2011 - Fort Wayne, IN** • March 26, 2011 - Ft. Lauderdale, FL • **April 2, 2011 - El Dorado, AR** • April 7, 2011 - Mesa, AZ • **April 13, 2011 - Vancouver, BC** • April 14, 2011 - Vancouver, BC • **April 15, 2011 - Victoria, BC** • April 17, 2011 - Calgary, AB • **April 18, 2011 - Edmonton, AB** • April 20, 2011 - Saskatoon, SK • **April 21, 2011 - Regina, SK** • April 22, 2011 - Winnipeg, MB • **April 23, 2011 - Winnipeg, MB** • April 25, 2011 - Thunder Bay, ON • **April 27, 2011 - Kitchener, ON** • April 28, 2011 - Hamilton, ON • **April 29, 2011 - Ottawa, ON** • April 30, 2011 - Montreal, QC • **May 2, 2011 - Toronto, ON** • May 3, 2011 - Kingston, ON • **May, 2011 - Mexico City, Mexico** • June 8, 2011 - Los Angeles, CA

New Bundle Alert!
NINTENDO DSi
BONUS
OR
NINTENDO DSi
BONUS
=$149.99
Limited Edition—while supplies last!

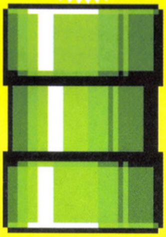
WARP ZONE

What we were writing about way back when

5 YEARS AGO

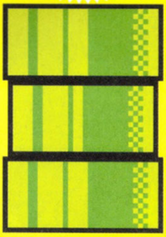
Five years ago the buzz was all about Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, which made its debut for the Nintendo DS handheld. Not coincidentally, Nintendo Power spotlighted several Wi-Fi compatible games, including Mario Kart DS, Animal Crossing: Wild World, and Tony Hawk's American Sk8land. The issue even included a pamphlet to help you get online. Elsewhere in the issue, Super Mario Bros. 2, Earthbound, and Street Fighter II got their props in the NP Top 200 countdown.

10 YEARS AGO



Arachnophobes, beware! The January 2001 issue of Nintendo Power was commandeered by Spider-Man, and featured a wraparound cover (displaying the web-slinger's iconic emblem) as well as free Spidey stickers. Inside, the magazine contained articles on Spider-Man (natch!) for N64 and Mega Man Xtreme for Game Boy Color, plus a 2001 preview insert that shed light on the upcoming Game Boy Advance.

20 YEARS AGO



Nintendo Power Library Reference Copy
NINTENDO POWER
MEGA MAN III
NINTENDO POWER
MEGA MAN II

Mega Man 3 was the center of attention in Nintendo Power 20 years ago, receiving an in-depth 20-page cover story. If you look closely at the cover, however, you'll notice something odd: Dr. Wily is repurposed from his appearance in Nintendo Power Vol. 7! The issue also contained an interview with boy band New Kids on the Block. The article provided details of their upcoming NES game, but it was eventually canned.

"BEST Wii™ GAME"- G4TV, E3 2010
"BEST PLATFORMING GAME"- IGN, E3 2010
"MICKEY LOOKS INCREDIBLE"- 1UP.COM

EPIC MICKEY

AVAILABLE 11.30.10
Facebook.com/DisneyEpicMickey

EVERYONE
E
Cartoon Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

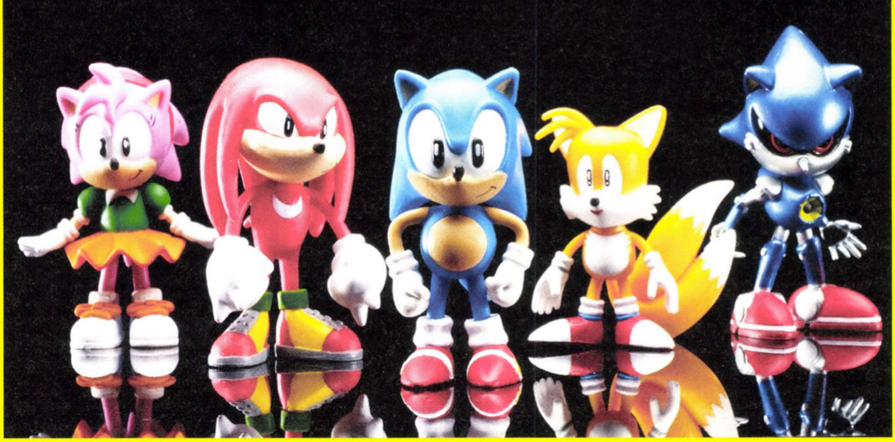
Wii

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

SERIOUSLY COOL STUFF FOR SERIOUS NINTENDO FANS

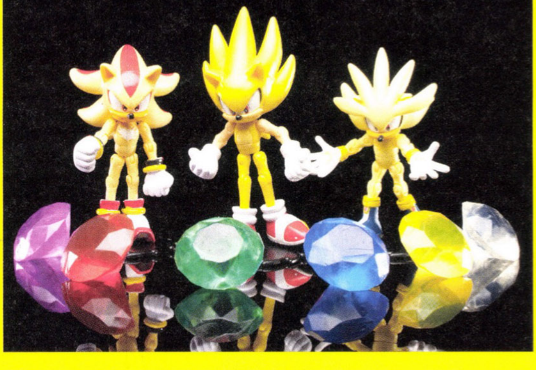
Old-School Rules

Fans who prefer Sonic the Hedgehog's vintage pot-bellied look to his svelt, green-eyed, modern redesign can relive the glory days with this six-figurine set from First4Figures. It includes classic versions of [L-R] Amy, Knuckles, Sonic, Tails, Metal Sonic, and Super Sonic (not pictured).



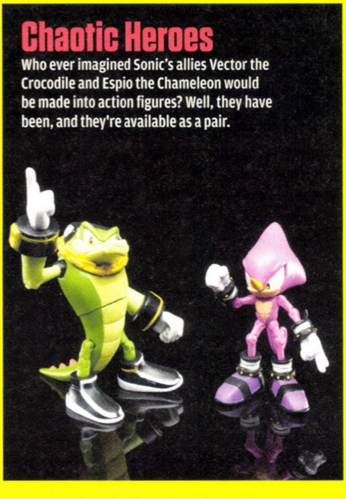
Gold Standard

Super Sonic—Sonic's powered-up form—is ready to bust Robotnik's keister. This boxed set from Jazwares includes [L-R] Super Shadow, Super Sonic, and Super Silver, plus the fabled Chaos Emeralds.



Chaotic Heroes

Who ever imagined Sonic's allies Vector the Crocodile and Espio the Chameleon would be made into action figures? Well, they have been, and they're available as a pair.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK MADEO

GAME FORECAST

Wii

Beastly Frantic Foto	Storm City	Q1 11
Captain America: Super Soldier	Sega	7/11
Cartoon Network*	Crave	HOL 11
Conduit 2	Sega	2/11
de Blob 2	THQ	2/11
Driver San Francisco	Ubisoft	2011
Enclave: Shadows of Twilight	TopWare	TBA
Green Lantern: Rise of the Manhunters	Warner Bros.	Q3 11
The Grinder	TBA	TBA
Hard Grip: The Climbing Game	TBA	TBA
Jimmie Johnson Racing: Anything with an Engine	Autumn	2011
The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword	Nintendo	2011
LEGO Pirates of the Caribbean: The Video Game	Disney	5/11
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	2/11
Man vs. Wild	Crave	3/11
Mario Sports Mix	Nintendo	2011
NASCAR The Game 2011	Activision	2/11
NCIS	Ubisoft	2011
Pyroblazer	TBA	TBA
Rock of the Dead	Conspiracy	TBA
Sky Pirates of Neo Terra	Aspyr	TBA
SpongeBob SquarePants*	THQ	TBA
Stratusphere	TBA	TBA
Thor: The Video Game	Sega	5/11
Top Spin 4	2K Sports	2011
WWE All Stars	THQ	2011
You Don't Know Jack	THQ	1/11

NINTENDO DS

ATV Wild Ride	Destineer	1/11
Beastly Frantic Foto	Storm City	Q1 11
Captain America: Super Soldier	Sega	7/11
de Blob 2	THQ	2/11
Disciples II	Strategy First	TBA
Doodle Hex	TBA	TBA
Dragon Quest VI: Realms of Reverie	Square Enix	TBA
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Chain Reaction	Deep Silver	TBA
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Critical Mass	Deep Silver	TBA
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Proving Grounds	Deep Silver	TBA
Gabrielle's Ghostly Groove	Natsume	1/11
Ghostwire: Link to the Paranormal	TBA	TBA
Green Lantern: Rise of the Manhunters	Warner Bros.	Q3 11
LEGO Pirates of the Caribbean: The Video Game	Disney	5/11
LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	2/11
Monster Tale	Majesco	3/11
Naruto Shippuden: Shinobi Rumble	Atlus	2/11
NCIS	Ubisoft	2011
Okamiden	Capcom	3/11
Pirate Battle	Orbital Media	TBA
Plants vs. Zombies	PopCap	1/11
Pokémon Black Version	Nintendo	SPR 11
Pokémon White Version	Nintendo	SPR 11
Radiant Historia	Atlus	2/11
Thor: The Video Game	Sega	5/11
You Don't Know Jack	THQ	1/11

NINTENDO 3DS

Animal Crossing*	Nintendo	TBA
Asphalt GT	Gameloft	TBA
Assassin's Creed Lost Legacy	Ubisoft	TBA
Baseball*	Konami	TBA
Batman*	Warner Bros.	TBA
Battle of Giants: Dinosaur Strike	Ubisoft	TBA
BloodRayne: The Shroud	Majesco	TBA
Bokujyoumonogatari 3D*	Marvelous	TBA
Bomberman*	Hudson	TBA
A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	TBA
Carnival Games*	Take-Two	TBA
Cartoon Network*	Crave	TBA
Chocobo Racing 3D*	Square Enix	TBA
Contra*	Konami	TBA
Crash-City GP	Rocket	TBA
cubic ninja	AQ	TBA
de Blob 2	THQ	TBA
Dead or Alive Dimensions	Tecmo Koei	TBA
Deca Sports*	Hudson	TBA
DJ Hero 3D	Activision	TBA
Dragon Ball*	Namco Bandai	TBA
Dragon Quest*	Square Enix	TBA
Driver Renegade	Ubisoft	TBA
Dynasty Warriors*	Tecmo Koei	TBA
Etrian Odyssey*	Atlus	TBA
Face Racers: Photo Finish	Majesco	TBA
FIFA Soccer*	Electronic Arts	TBA
Final Fantasy*	Square Enix	TBA
Frogger*	Konami	TBA
Gundam*	Namco Bandai	TBA
Hollywood '61*	Ubisoft	TBA
Kid Icarus: Uprising	Nintendo	TBA
Kingdom Hearts 3DS*	Square Enix	TBA
Kororinpa*	Hudson	TBA
Kung Fu Panda Kaboom of Doom	THQ	TBA
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D	Nintendo	TBA
LEGO*	Warner Bros.	TBA
Lion's Pride: Adventures in the Serengeti	Majesco	TBA
Lovely Lisa 3D	Tomy	TBA
Madden NFL Football	Electronic Arts	TBA
Mario Kart*	Nintendo	TBA
Martha Stewart	Majesco	TBA
Marvel Super Hero Squad: The Infinity Gauntlet	THQ	TBA
Mega Man Legends 3	Capcom	TBA
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater	Konami	TBA
My Garden	Electronic Arts	TBA
Naruto Shippuden Action	Tomy	TBA
Ninja Gaiden*	Tecmo Koei	TBA
Nintendogs + Cats	Nintendo	TBA
Pac-Man & Galaga*	Namco Bandai	TBA
Paper Mario*	Nintendo	TBA
The Penguins of Madagascar	THQ	TBA
PilotWings Resort	Nintendo	TBA
Pro Evolution Soccer*	Konami	TBA
Professor Layton and the Mask of Miracle*	Level-5	TBA
Puss N Boots	THQ	TBA
Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D	Capcom	TBA
Resident Evil Revelations	Capcom	TBA
Ridge Racer*	Namco Bandai	TBA
Saints Row: Drive-By	THQ	TBA
Samurai Warriors 3D*	Tecmo Koei	TBA
Shin Megami Tensei*	Atlus	TBA
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Survivor*	Atlus	TBA
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona*	Atlus	TBA
The Sims 3	Electronic Arts	TBA
Sonic*	Sega	TBA
SpongeBob SquarePants*	THQ	TBA
Star Fox 64 3D	Nintendo	TBA
Steel Diver	Nintendo	TBA
Super Monkey Ball*	Sega	TBA
Super Robot*	Namco Bandai	TBA
Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition*	Capcom	TBA
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft	TBA
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	Ubisoft	TBA
VS-robo	Rocket	TBA
WonderWorld Amusement Park	Majesco	TBA

READERS' MOST WANTED

Vote for your favorites at
www.nintendopower.com/polls

Wii

1. The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword
2. Mario Sports Mix
3. LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars
4. Conduit 2
5. de Blob 2

NINTENDO DS

1. Pokémon Black Version/ Pokémon White Version
2. Okamiden
3. Dragon Quest VI: Realms of Reverie
4. de Blob 2
5. LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars

NINTENDO 3DS

1. Paper Mario*
2. Mario Kart*
3. The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D
4. Kid Icarus: Uprising
5. Star Fox 64 3D

RED TEXT = TITLES ADDED THIS MONTH. * TENTATIVE TITLE **NOTE:** RELEASE DATES OFTEN CHANGE.

DOWNLOAD

IN THIS SECTION

WiiWARE PREVIEW
Protocol

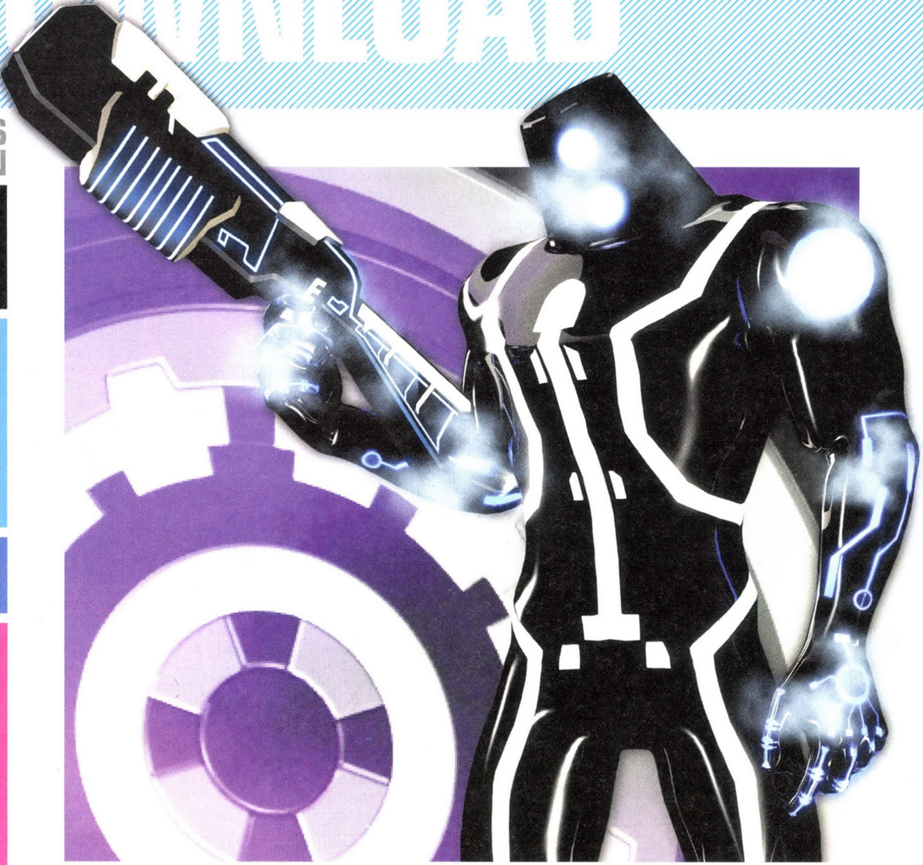
WiiWARE/DSiWARE STRATEGY
Cave Story

WiiWARE NEWS
Game Demos

WiiWARE REVIEWS
BIT.TRIP FATE
DERBY DOGS
FLUIDITY
GENE LABS
GODS VS. HUMANS
ROBOX
SNOWPACK PARK
TRIPLE RUNNING SPORTS

VIRTUAL CONSOLE REVIEWS
STREET SLAM

DSiWARE REVIEWS
21: BLACKJACK
ADVENTURE IN VEGAS: SLOT MACHINE
CAVE STORY
GENE LABS
GO! GO! ISLAND RESCUE!
GO FETCH!
GO SERIES DEFENSE WARS
GO SERIES PINBALL ATTACK!
NEED FOR SPEED NITRO-X
PAUL'S SHOOTING ADVENTURE
PEG SOLITAIRE
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



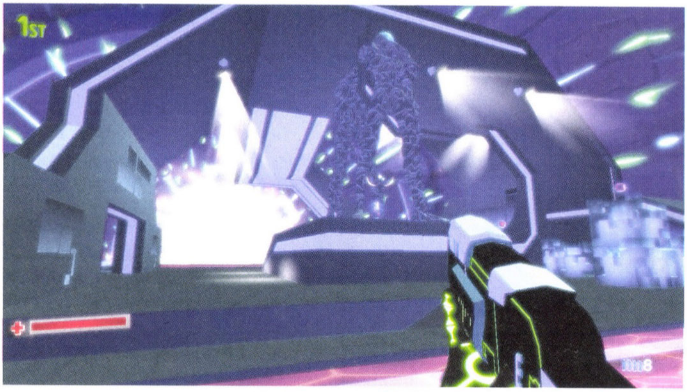
Virtual Fatality

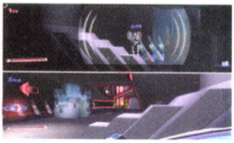
Wage some postmodern warfare in Protocol, a new WiiWare FPS.

IN COMPUTING, A protocol is a set of rules and standards that govern how two systems talk to each other. Pretty boring stuff in reality, but ever since *TRON*, games have been leading us to think there's something much more fun and intriguing going on inside the machines.

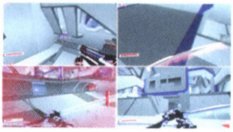
That's where Protocol—an upcoming WiiWare first-person shooter from developer/publisher Sabarasa—comes in. The game plays on the cyberpunk conceit of a virtual 3D world replacing our boring old workaday desktops. Juan Pablo Bouquet, the title's executive producer, neatly sums up the motivation behind his team's project: "We were tired of realistic shooters." Instead of furiously typing on a UNIX command line, in this world warring hackers get to run around like Quake marines and battle for access to fields of hidden data.

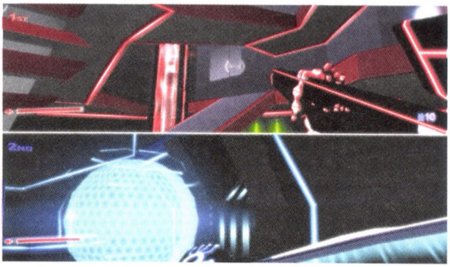
These guys are a little smarter than Quake marines, though, and in that regard Protocol takes the FPS in a clever direction. No self-respecting hacker could leave the rules of the game alone—you've gotta cheat to win, as a wise man once said. Each level has "data lanes" for players to manipulate to change the basic rules of how the map works. Some lanes unlock teleporters to quickly hop across the stage or reveal hidden areas. Others change the gravity in rooms and cor-





[Below] Protocol emphasizes online splitscreen co-op battles.





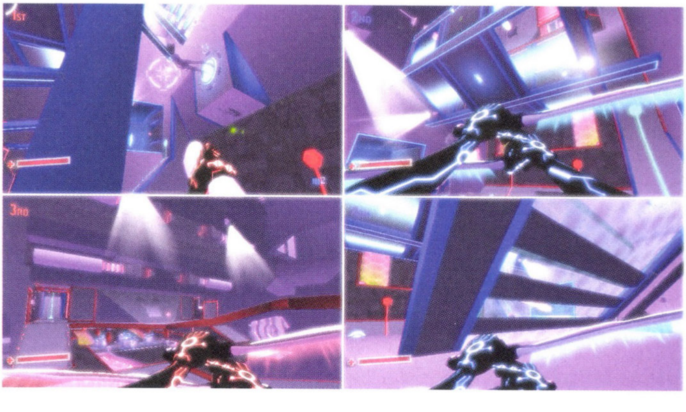
ridors, since in a virtual world, "up" can be whatever you say it is.

Even without someone hacking them to pieces, the levels look pretty wild. Protocol is a small-scale shooter—two-on-two matches in local multiplayer, four-on-four online—but it works the potential of a digital space to the hilt. Bouquet's favorite concept, he tells us, "is shaped like a cube. Players can use data lanes to teleport all around it, even to the six outside faces of the cube." Others use gravity shifts to link up paths at impossible angles, a riff on M.C. Escher's famous optical illusions. All of the areas feature a slick, polished visual style, with bright foreground colors jumping out of dimmer backgrounds. The *TRON* influence is obvious, and it works just right with the physics-defying architecture.

When it comes to controls and head-to-head combat, online-shooter veterans should find the territory a little more familiar. Protocol uses a class-based system in the Team Fortress tradition, with four classes to choose from. Snipers, for example, can pick up the assassin kit and roam around dropping their targets at long range. To make conventional weapons a bit less predictable, everything has a secondary fire mode that goes beyond simple point-and-shoot. The heavy gunner's weapon, for instance, tosses bouncing grenades (think of the rocket launcher's alt-fire in the Unreal Tournament series)—handy in case there's a target holed up around a corner. Game types include tested classics such as a play on Counter-Strike's Demolition game (where one team tries to plant a bomb in the other team's base), a tag/assassin mode in which one player gets all the weapons and has to hold out as long as possible against everyone else on the map, and traditional deathmatches.

Protocol is built for multiplayer gaming, period—Bouquet explains he'd rather do one mode well than wind up with a few so-so modes—and the setup mixes the feel of older shooters and new ones. You can hook up with allies online and communicate via a set of basic controller shortcuts, but according to the dev team, the best way to play is for four friends to join forces locally on the same Wii console, then go online to battle other teams. There are obvious advantages to the party-versus-party approach: there's less fooling around with friend codes when getting a game together, and it's easier to work out strategy when you're all on the same couch.

Protocol is a big step forward for Sabarasa, which developed Mazes of Fate for the Nintendo DS handheld. One of the first rising game-makers from Latin America (the company has two main shops, in Mexico City and Buenos Aires), it's just beginning to build a reputation on the world stage. Bouquet has plenty of confidence in what will be the first online FPS for WiiWare, though. "No other game offers so many modes and so much focus on the online experience," he boasts, which is a pretty bold statement in what might become a cutthroat field. We'll see if Protocol can back it up when it's released in early 2011. **—DAVID S.**

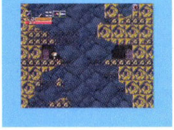


Cave Conqueror

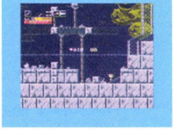
Learn how to reach the hidden final stage and earn the best ending in Cave Story for WiiWare and DSiWare.

CAVE STORY (now available for WiiWare and DSiWare) can be a pretty challenging game, but its toughest part is also one of the trickiest to find. To reach the game's secret final area—the Blood-Stained Sanctuary—you must perform a very specific set of actions during your adventure. By following the steps detailed here you'll be able to reach this incredibly difficult area; conquer it and you can learn all the mysteries of Cave Story and experience the game's best ending. —**CHRIS H.**

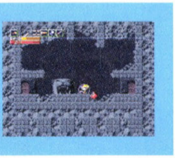
1. In the Labyrinth (after you've beaten Monster X), you'll enter a room with a large gap and a small red mark on the floor. There's also a save spot nearby—be sure to use it. You must jump across the gap without falling; the red mark indicates the spot you should jump from. If you fall down below and encounter Professor Booster, reload your game and make the jump.



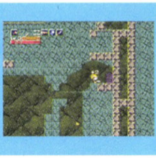
2. After clearing the Labyrinth and entering the Core area, you will break open a few sets of blast doors. After that, do not speak to Curly or examine the robot next to her. Instead, immediately head to the lower-right portion of this area. You will notice something shining in the water. Press Down on the Control Pad to get the tow rope. Afterward, you may speak with Curly.



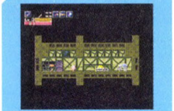
3. Use the tow rope on Curly after you have defeated the Core and Curly has given you her air tank. This will allow you to bring Curly with you and, hopefully, save her.



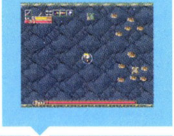
4. In the next area, the Waterway, you must make your way to a small cabin. It's near the end of the area, after a large school of jellyfish.



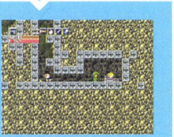
5. Inside the cabin, lay Curly down on the bed and examine the computer, then the bookcase. You will learn how to repair flooded robots. Use this newfound knowledge to bring Curly back to consciousness.



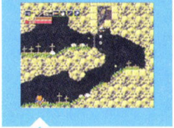
6. After repairing Curly, investigate her so you can take her with you. You will be separated from her after the next boss battle.



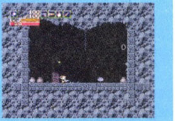
7. Once you arrive at the Plantation you will find Curly at the lower-right corner of the area, along with a native. Speak with both of them, and you'll learn that Curly has amnesia. Luckily, the native will tell you about a rare mushroom that returns one's memory.



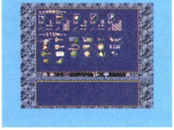
8. Find your way back to Mimiga Village and from there enter the cemetery. Using the Booster 2.0, enter the door in the upper-right that was previously impossible to reach.



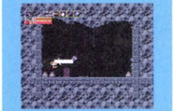
9. Inside you will find Ma Pignon. Answer his questions correctly (yes, yes, no, yes, yes, no), and he'll reward you with an item.

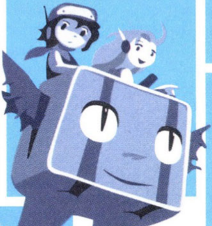


10. Examine the new item in your inventory. You'll find it's useless. Speak with Ma Pignon again after exiting the Inventory screen.

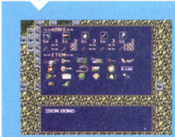


11. You must now fight Ma Pignon. Defeating him will earn you the real Ma Pignon. Return to Curly in the Plantation.

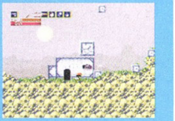




12. Use the Ma Pignon on Curly. Her memory will return and she will explain a great deal about the past. Speak with her again after she's done talking and she will reward you with the Iron Bond—the last item you need to access the Blood-Stained Sanctuary. If you don't get the Iron Bond, you won't be able to access the secret level.



13. After defeating the Undead Core and attempting to escape the island, you'll notice that the door to the small building where you probably saved your progress is open. Enter at your own risk (there's no going back out!) and get ready to face Cave Story's ultimate challenge.



Nice Threads

The route to the Blood-Stained Sanctuary isn't the only secret in Cave Story. For example, the WiiWare version of the game features secret codes to change the main character's appearance. Enter the following codes on the title screen to try on some new duds. The "Press the A Button to Begin" message will flash when the codes are entered properly.

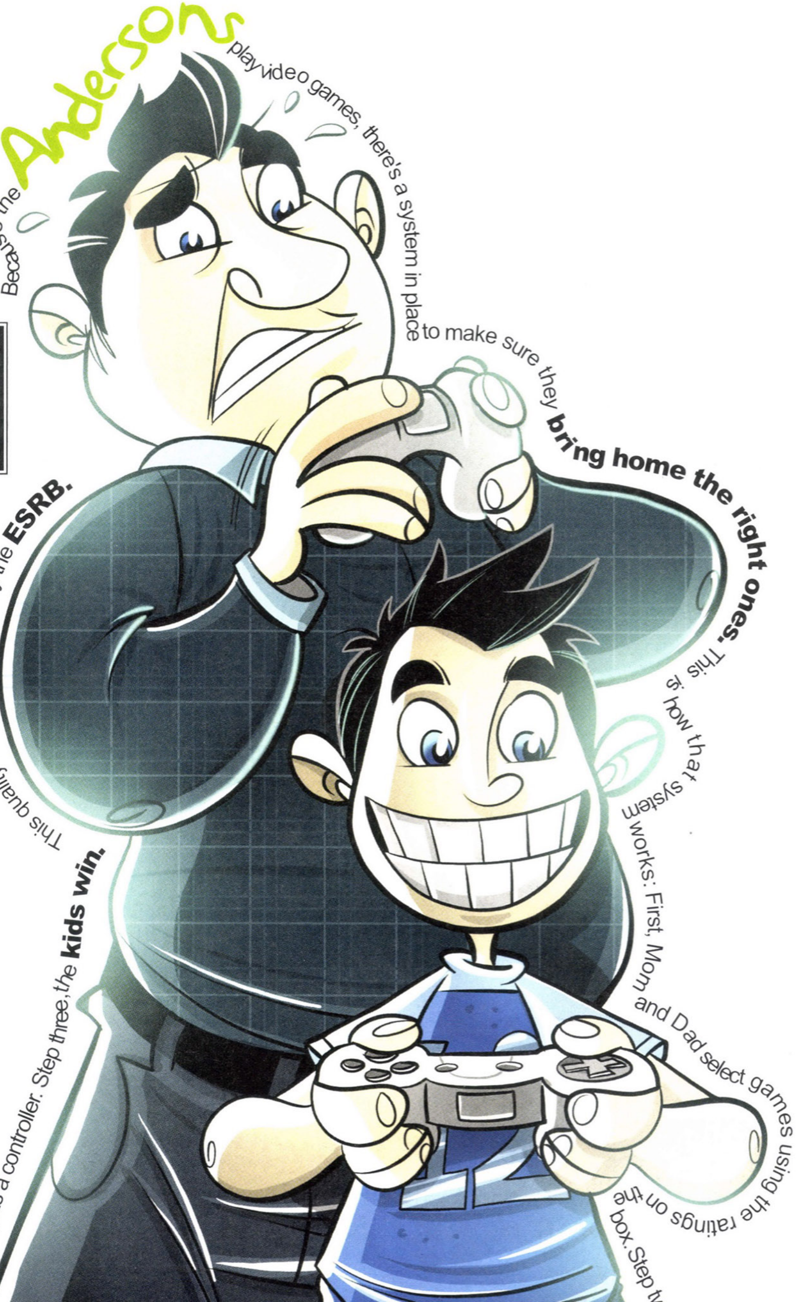
RED OUTFIT
Hold B, then hit 1, 2, 1, 2, 2.

YELLOW OUTFIT
Hold B, then hit 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, Down.

BLUE OUTFIT
Hold B, then hit 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, Up.

HALLOWEEN OUTFIT
Hold B, then hit 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, Plus, Plus, Minus, Minus, Right.

CHRISTMAS OUTFIT
Hold B, then hit 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, Left.



Because the **Andersons** play video games, there's a system in place to make sure they **bring home the right ones.** This is how that system works: First, Mom and Dad select games using the ratings on the box. Step t

veryone gets a controller. Step three, the **kids win.**

This quality time is presented by the **ESRB.**

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

and yet it moves
DEMO
Wii Menu
Start

SUPER SAMPLER

Good news for WiiWare fans who want to try out games before plunking down their hard-earned Wii Points: playable demos have returned to the Wii Shop Channel! Starting in late November, free demos became available for several top WiiWare games, including old-school-inspired Cave Story, wet-and-wild Fluidity, new-age shooter Bit.Trip Fate, rotation-based platformer And Yet It Moves, graphically astounding Jett Rocket, and fast-paced puzzler ThruSpace. After you've played through a demo, you'll have the option to return to the Wii Shop Channel to buy the full game. Although the demos will be available for only a limited time, new demos are planned to be added on a routine basis. If you want to easily access all the demos that are currently on tap, you can perform a WiiWare search under the Demo genre.

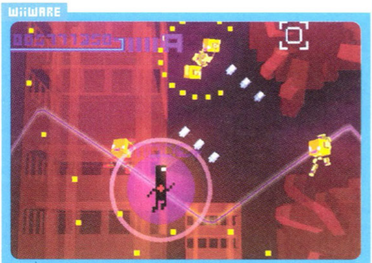
BIT.TRIP
FATE
DEMO
PLAY DEMO
VISIT SHOP

Go to the Wii Shop Channel
JETT ROCKET
Demo
Start Demo!

ThruSpace
Wii Menu
Start

EVALUATION STATION

WiiWARE



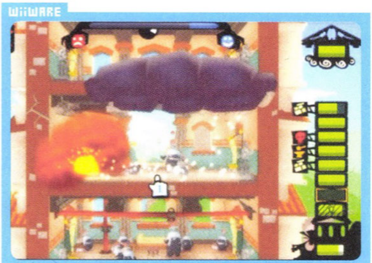
BIT.TRIP FATE

PUBLISHER: **AKSYS GAMES** GENRE: **SHOOTER** Wii POINTS: **800**

This latest entry in the ever-evolving Bit.Trip series is an odd blend of shooter styles. It's part side-scrolling shooter, part twin-sticks shooter, and part on-rails shooter (quite literally). You might not think that these different types would go together well, but developer Gaijin Games makes it work. Instead of limiting your freedom, the on-rails aspect of the game, along with that fact that Commander Video moves faster when not firing, forces you to plan your moves and attacks carefully amid the constant enemy fire. The stages tend to drag on a bit too long, but your diligence is rewarded with some great boss encounters. As usual for Bit.Trip, the retro graphics and club-tastic soundtrack enhance the experience. —PHIL T.

Recommended

WiiWARE



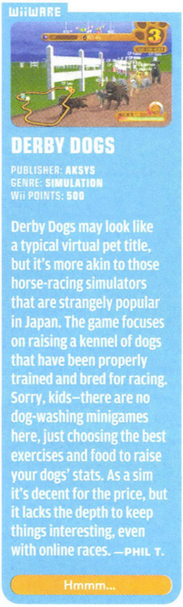
GODS VS. HUMANS

PUBLISHER: **ZALLAG** GENRE: **STRATEGY** Wii POINTS: **1,2000**

Those pesky humans, teeming with hubris, are building a tower to the heavens to depose the gods. As a god, your job is to knock down said tower. Generally, this is achieved by strategically destroying individual tower levels while avoiding human casualties. Avoiding casualties is critical because your divine powers—split between destructive smiting and crowd control—are fueled by happy humans (and humans consumed by holy fire are seldom chipper). Needless to say, the clever premise goes a long way toward justifying the steep price, and the content on offer helps (multiple gods from four cultures, several play modes, and head-to-head competition). Unfortunately, it all comes with one titan of a downside: monotony. —PATRICK C.

Hmmm...

WiiWARE



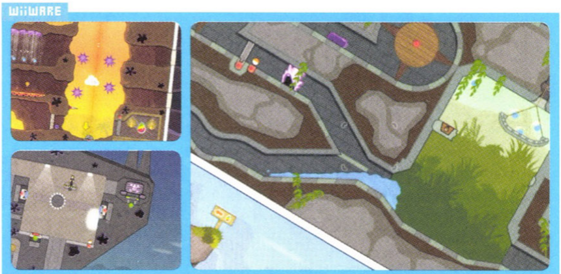
DERBY DOGS

PUBLISHER: **AKSYS**
GENRE: **SIMULATION**
Wii POINTS: **500**

Derby Dogs may look like a typical virtual pet title, but it's more akin to those horse-racing simulators that are strangely popular in Japan. The game focuses on raising a kennel of dogs that have been properly trained and bred for racing. Sorry, kids—there are no dog-washing minigames here, just choosing the best exercises and food to raise your dogs' stats. As a sim it's decent for the price, but it lacks the depth to keep things interesting, even with online races. —PHIL T.

Hmmm...

WiiWARE



FLUIDITY

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO** GENRE: **ADVENTURE** Wii POINTS: **1,200**

Chris H's Pick

If Fluidity involved nothing more than using water to solve physics-based puzzles, it would probably be a pretty cool game. But when you mix that concept with a vast, open-ended, Metroid-style world and a constantly evolving set of abilities, you've suddenly got one of the deepest and most creative titles on WiiWare. Fluidity's pacing is excellent; there are almost always multiple tasks to accomplish (from activating machines to eliminating bad guys to assisting nonplayable characters) and you continuously unlock new areas and earn new skills—such as turning into ice or a steam cloud—to keep things interesting. The level design is deviously brilliant and frequently complex, striking a great balance between mental challenges and reflex-based action; be prepared to be tested on both fronts. On the down side, the game can be frustrating and the steam-cloud motion controls are cumbersome, but Fluidity is worth your time regardless.

Recommended

WiiWARE
VIRTUAL CONSOLE
DSiWARE

WiiWARE

GENE LABS

PUBLISHER: **FRONTLINE STUDIOS**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
Wii POINTS: **500**

Gene Labs puts you in the goopy shoes of a micro-organism fighting for domination over its rival microbes. There isn't a lot to say about the game other than that its core concept, strategically spreading your microbe over the screen, is broken. By "broken" I mean I completed over a hundred levels without noticing any inkling of intended challenge, strategy, or any other quality that would make Gene Labs the least bit entertaining. Harsh words, I know, but true. —**DAVID M.**

Grumble Grumble

WiiWARE

ROBOX

PUBLISHER: **DREAMBOX GAMES**
GENRE: **PLATFORMER**
Wii POINTS: **1,000**

On one hand, Robox is a beautifully illustrated side-scroller with some interesting old-school elements; not only are the difficulty and strictly horizontal shooting Mega Man-esque, but there's a large degree of nonlinear exploration reminiscent of Metroid. On the other hand, the slow-paced gameplay causes levels to drag on, and the learning curve is distastefully steep. Often there's no indication of where to go, and many areas require annoying trial and error. —**CODY M.**

Hmmm...

WiiWARE

SNOWPACK PARK

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO** GENRE: **ADVENTURE** Wii POINTS: **800**

What could be better then running around the arctic befriending and shepherding a small army of adorable penguins? Sticking ridiculous hats on all of 'em! As you explore a winter wonderland with the little tuxedo-adorned birdies, you'll play minigames, go fishing, collect headwear, and visit far-off areas of the park to find more penguins. Snowpack Park is a short romp that is most likely to be enjoyed by a younger audience, and the majority of its minigames tend to fall flat after the first play. However, the act of running about, collecting the penguins from different areas, and making all of them like you enough to flock around you everywhere you go makes for an amusing little adventure. —**DAVID M.**

Recommended

WiiWARE

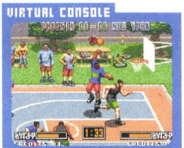
TRIPLE RUNNING SPORTS

PUBLISHER: **THE CODE MONKEYS**
GENRE: **SPORTS**
Wii POINTS: **500**

We've got three events on offer: 100m Sprint (furiously pumping the Wii Remote and Nunchuk controllers), 110m Hurdles (furiously pumping said controllers while hitting a button to jump), and the 1500m (pumping said controllers rhythm-game-style to lamely approximate stamina). It's all quite awful as far as the tendons in your wrists are concerned. But what say your eyes, ears, and heart? "We concur," they say. "This game hurts us, as well." —**PATRICK C.**

Grumble Grumble

VIRTUAL CONSOLE



STREET SLAM

PLATFORM: **NEOGEO**
PUBLISHER: **D4 ENTERPRISE/ DATA EAST**
GENRE: **SPORTS**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1994**

By the standard of early/mid-'90s arcade-style basketball games, Street Slam is surprisingly controllable; the action is easy to follow, and executing on defense and offense will not confound you. Of course, the game hails from the era of quarter-stealing, so don't be surprised when your AI opponent nails four three-pointers in a row. It's all good fun, but probably not worth the 900 Wii Point asking price. —**PATRICK C.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE

21: BLACKJACK

PUBLISHER: **DIGITAL LEISURE**
GENRE: **GAMBLING**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

Blackjack, being mostly a game of chance, is hard to love in video game form. The best conversions offer atmosphere to counter the relative lack of interactivity. Unfortunately, that isn't the case here. While 21: Blackjack does provide an adequate series of options for customizing play (tailoring game rules and dealer AI), its stripped-down, atmosphere-free presentation reduces blackjack to a statistical exercise. Yuck. —**PATRICK C.**

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE

ADVENTURE IN VEGAS: SLOT MACHINE

PUBLISHER: **GAMELION**
GENRE: **GAMBLING**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

Adventure in Vegas is ultimately a game about pulling a lever and hoping for the best, but at least it's one that features a tiny bit of strategy, tangible goals, and decent graphics and sound. The price is reasonable, too. —**CHRIS H.**

Hmmm...

DSiWARE

GENE LABS

PUBLISHER: **FRONTLINE STUDIOS**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

Only slightly better than its dreadful WiiWare counterpart, Gene Labs offers little in terms of strategic gameplay, and only a smidgen more of any sort of puzzlelike challenge (thanks to less-limited AI). However, there is little help for the overall troubled gameplay. —**DAVID M.**

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE

GO! GO! ISLAND RESCUE!

PUBLISHER: **CONNECT2MEDIA**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

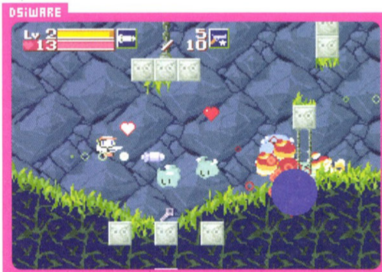
The delightfully titled Go! Go! Island Rescue! plays a bit like Lemmings or Mario vs. Donkey Kong. Here, you control a fireman tasked with saving wandering tourists from a burning hotel. A solid number of levels and different tourist types (each with their own abilities) keeps the puzzles varied, and the rewind feature provides a nice way to correct your mistakes. For the price, it offers a good amount of charm and challenge. —**PHIL T.**

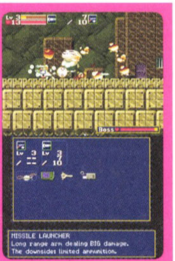
Recommended

EVALUATION STATION

WiiWARE
VIRTUAL CONSOLE
DSiWARE

DSiWARE




MISSILE LAUNCHER
Long range arm dealing BIG damage.
The downside: limited ammunition.

CAVE STORY

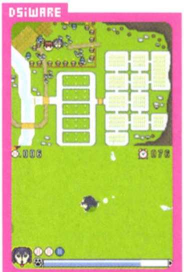
PUBLISHER: **NICALIS** GENRE: **ADVENTURE** NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **1,000**

Justin C's Pick

If you've played Cave Story on WiiWare already (and shame on you if you haven't), you know exactly what to expect from this DSiWare version—it's the same action-packed, challenging Metroid-style game, only portable. And it's for that reason that I actually prefer the DSiWare game over its WiiWare sibling. I do wish the DSiWare game had a quick-save option, however; when you're on the go, you never know when you're going to have to stop playing. (You can suspend your progress by closing the Nintendo DSi, of course, but an actual save would be preferred.) I also would have liked to see the game make more use of the second screen—maybe put the map there, à la the dual-screened Castlevania titles. (You can call up the map on the bottom screen at any time by pressing Select, but that pauses the action.) These are very, very minor complaints, though; Cave Story for DSiWare is absolutely fantastic as it is.

Recommended

DSiWARE



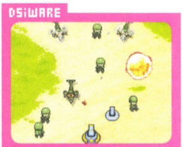
GO FETCH!

PUBLISHER: **AGETEC**
GENRE: **ACTION**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Controlling a dog that's playing fetch with its owner is a clever premise for a game. The controls work rather well and there is a wide variety of obstacle-filled locales. Unfortunately, the action grows repetitive quickly, and it's a bit too difficult for its target audience. —PHIL T.

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



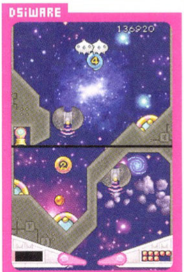
GO SERIES DEFENSE WARS

PUBLISHER: **GAMEBRIDGE**
GENRE: **ACTION**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

In arcade shorthand, GSDW is a lot like a mashup of Missile Command and Ikari Warriors. In other words, players shoot artillery from a top-down perspective at hordes of blitzing attackers. Gamebridge deserves kudos for the depth they bring to the concept (especially for two bucks): a variety of artillery types and enemy units, chain-attack bonuses, and unique stage scenarios keep this basic shooter surprisingly fresh. —PATRICK C.

Recommended

DSiWARE



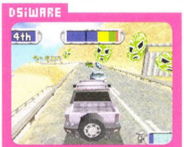
GO SERIES PINBALL ATTACK!

PUBLISHER: **GAMEBRIDGE**
GENRE: **PINBALL**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Pinball Attack! is an odd hybrid of pinball and vertical-scrolling shooters. It's a concept that holds surprising promise, but awful pinball physics drag this game down. What good is a pinball shooter if the ball never goes where it should? —PHIL T.

Grumble Grumble

DSiWARE



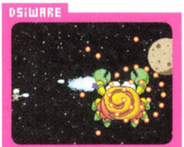
NEED FOR SPEED NITRO-X

PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
GENRE: **RACING**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **800**

Essentially a lower-cost, downloadable version of the already-released-on-a-DS-cartridge Need for Speed Nitro, Nitro-X is a good value. This DSiWare edition is a fun, over-the-top arcade racer in which you can do things such as jumping and flipping over police barricades. There are occasionally some issues when trying to execute these Heroic Driving moves, but racing fans should still give Nitro-X a spin. —JUSTIN C.

Recommended

DSiWARE



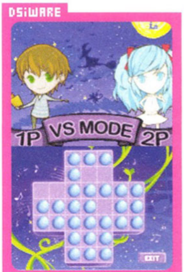
PAUL'S SHOOTING ADVENTURE

PUBLISHER: **AGETEC**
GENRE: **SHOOTER**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **200**

Paul's Shooting Adventure is worth checking out for the sheer weirdness factor alone. In this classic-style side-scroller, you play as a baby—a superpowered flying baby—who blasts wave after wave of aggressive (but adorable) ocean creatures. There's not much here in the way of technique, but being able to transform into defeated enemies (each with their own weapons) is neat, and the price is right. —CHRIS H.

Recommended

DSiWARE



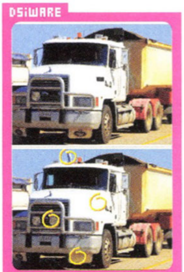
PEG SOLITAIRE

PUBLISHER: **CIRCLE ENTERTAINMENT**
GENRE: **BOARD GAME**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Based on the classic board game, Peg Solitaire plays quite well on the Nintendo DSi thanks to the stylus-based controls. It is, however, lacking in challenge. It doesn't take long to solve the game's puzzles, and aside from a decent two-player mode, there is little replay value. —PHIL T.

Hmmm...

DSiWARE



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

PUBLISHER: **ENJOY GAMING**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

As far as identification-based visual puzzle games go, Spot the Difference isn't bad. It has a lot of images to test your perception skills and it's surprisingly challenging. Unfortunately, that doesn't change the fact that the basic premise is pretty uninspired. —CHRIS H.

Hmmm...

MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

This is **Chris**, hardcore gamer. He's been playing games ever since he could grip a controller. When he was growing up, **his parents used the ESRB rating**

o choose the games that were right for him. One day he'll use the ratings to **decide what games his kids play** – he just doesn't know it yet.

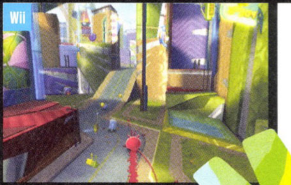
HELLO
my name is
Chris

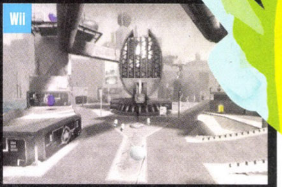
PREVIEWS

IN THIS SECTION

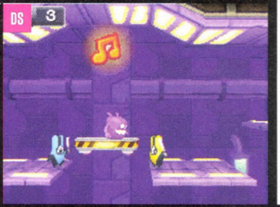
Wii PREVIEWS
CAPTAIN AMERICA: SUPER SOLDIER pg.32
CONDUIT 2 pg.36
DE BLOB 2 pg.30

DS PREVIEWS
ATV WILD RIDE pg.37
DE BLOB 2 pg.30
OKAMIDEN pg.34





[Above] The world will remain lifeless and gray unless Blob is able to defeat the sinister Cult of Blanc.



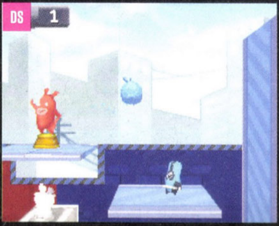
DE BLOB 2

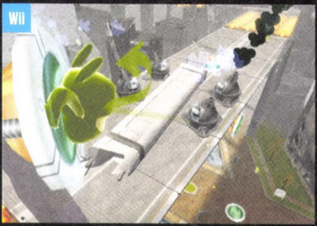
Now this is what we call a full-spectrum warrior.

IN DE BLOB 2 (previously titled de Blob: The Underground), the world of color is once again under attack. Luckily, THQ's roly-poly Blob is back as well, and he's going to do whatever it takes to prevent the monochromatic bad guys from having their way.

In the Wii console version of the game, the evil Cult of Blanc—led by the fanatical Papa Blanc—is brainwashing the citizens of Prisma City. As a result, the city's liveliness has been stripped away; there's no more color, no more music, no more fun. But by coating himself in paint and splattering himself all over the environment, Blob will restore the world to its former glory.

On the surface, de Blob 2 seems a lot like its predecessor, but the developers are making a lot of changes to ensure that the game is deeper and more diverse, yet also more accessible to all types of players (thanks to additions such as multiple difficulty settings and a more straightforward mission structure). And when I say "deeper," I mean that literally—although you'll spend a lot





of time painting buildings, squashing bad guys, and jumping around the city exterior, you'll have many opportunities to go underground and visit interior environments.

When you get to the district known as Blanctown, for example, you'll discover that there's no paint, so you won't be able to restore the area until you venture underground, engage in some 2D platforming, and release paint pools above ground. Once the color is flowing freely, you'll be able to return to the surface and resume restoring the world by completing challenges, such as defeating groups of enemies, painting buildings specific colors, or rescuing a landmark building. Speaking of which, this time out there's a lot more to restoring landmarks than simply coating yourself in the correct color of paint and shaking the Wii Remote controller; now you must go inside the structure, then accomplish a task—squashing foes or hitting a series of color-coded switches, for example—to wrest the landmark from enemy control.

Though the 2D interior areas are the biggest addition to de Blob 2, they're far from the only new element. You'll encounter new types of enemies, such as TV monitors that release flying hypno-discs; if a disc touches you, it will try to guide you into hazardous ink or other traps unless you waggle the Wii Remote to break free of its control. You'll also get to use new powers, including a mighty dash attack and the ability to temporarily transform into a metal wrecking ball (which enables you to stick to magnetic surfaces). There are even some areas, such as parts of Comrade Black University, where gravity fields enable you to climb up walls or attach to the ceiling.

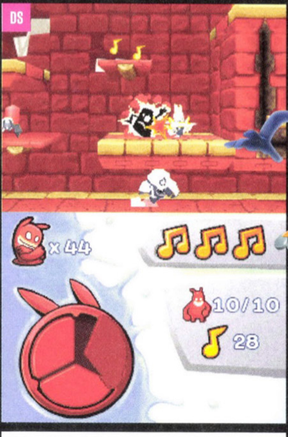
Further adding to the experience is a commerce system (which lets you buy extra lives, increase your paint capacity, decrease your paint usage, and more) and a Super Mario Galaxy–style co-op mode that lets a second player lend a hand by controlling Blob's robot pal, Pinky.

The Nintendo DS handheld version of de Blob 2, meanwhile, is a completely distinct game. Set prior to the events of the console version, the DS title is a 2D side-scrolling platformer that pits Blob against the machinations of mad scientist Dr. Van Blot. The game has come a long way since we last saw it; the environments are much more lively and the graphics have been cleaned up considerably.

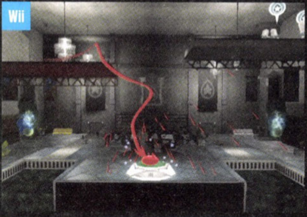
Like in the Wii version, you coat the environments with an assortment of hues as you explore, but the painting aspect is secondary to navigating the stages, bouncing off walls, smashing through crates, rescuing captured citizens, and using Blob's homing jump attack to squash Inky soldiers. There are numerous hazards to avoid (including dangerous ink traps) and puzzles to overcome—such as walls and platforms you can traverse only when you're a specific color. And with 45 levels spread across nine worlds, the game should keep you playing for a while.

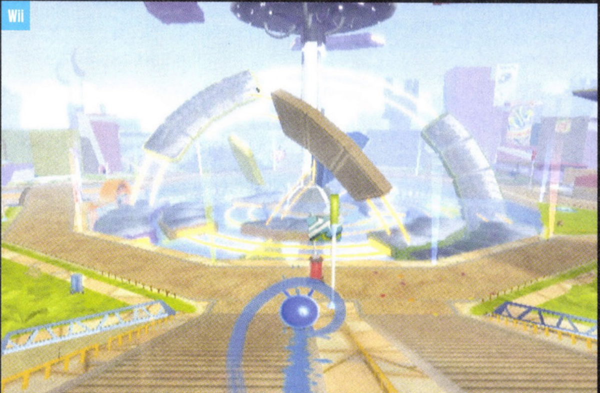
Although the Wii and DS versions of de Blob 2 provide different gaming experiences, both of them are shaping up very well. They're poised to be among the most worthwhile games of early 2011. —CHRIS H.

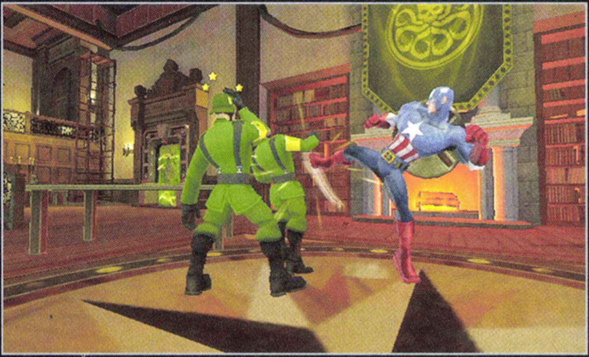
Wii DS PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: BLUE TONGUE
(Wii), HALFBRICK (DS)
RELEASE: FEBRUARY 2011

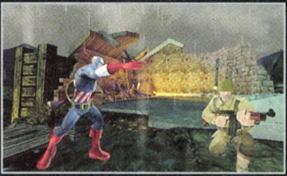


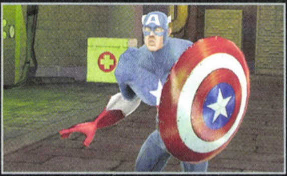
[Above] The bad guys had better look out. Something's got Blob seeing red.











CAPTAIN AMERICA: SUPER SOLDIER

He is a real American. He fights for the rights of every man.

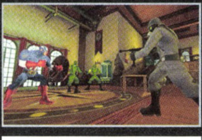
DESPITE BEING THE iconic superhero that he is, Captain America hasn't starred in many video games. Sure, Cap is on the roster of several Capcom fighters, but the Star-Spangled Avenger hasn't had his own adventure since the beat-'em-ups of the early '90s (the most notable being Captain America and the Avengers). But that's about to change with the release of Captain America: Super Soldier.

Super Soldier is being released to coincide with the debut of the *Captain America: The First Avenger* film, but it seems to be more than just another movie game. For one thing, the High Voltage Software–developed Super Soldier has a unique visual style reminiscent of the *Batman: The Brave and the Bold* cartoon, giving the title a lighter, more fun feel. The game also features an original WWII-era story (scribed by Christos Gage, who currently writes the Avengers Academy comic-book series) wherein Captain America infiltrates a castle teeming with HYDRA baddies and the likes of Arnim Zola, Madame Hydra, and the Red Skull.

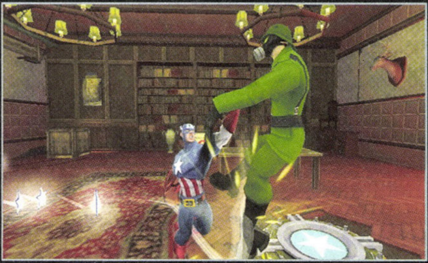
Fortunately, Cap has his mighty shield by his side, which he can use to defend himself or throw as a giant Frisbee. You simply aim at your target with the Wii Remote controller's pointer and throw your shield. Doing this stuns enemies, which allows you to run up to them and clean their clocks. Or you can use the shield to bounce bullets back at targets; the deflected projectiles hit wherever you're pointing on the screen. In addition to using these techniques for defeating adversaries, you have to employ them to solve puzzles so you can progress. For example, a locked room may have three switches that must be hit nearly simultaneously. You paint each switch with your reticle and then throw your shield; the three switches get hit in quick succession, which opens the exit.

What we've seen of Captain America: Super Soldier looks promising. But we must admit, as comic-book fans we're just happy to see that Cap is finally getting another game of his own. **—JUSTIN C.**

Wii **PUBLISHER: SEGA**
DEVELOPER: HIGH VOLTAGE SOFTWARE
RELEASE: JULY 2011



[Below] Cap learned a lot from his stint in the Capcom games.



TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Because Jess plays video games the ESRB (that's the Entertainment Software Rating Board) understands that some games aren't right for everyone.
Just like movies, every game has a rating. And those ratings come from the ESRB.

© 2006 ESRB. All rights reserved.

www.ESRB.org

OKAMIDEN

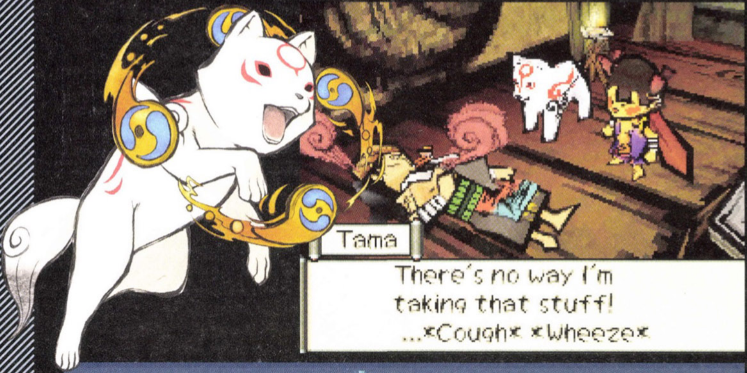
Chibiterasu's new tricks will put your Nintendog to shame.

IN LAST MONTH'S extensive Okamiden feature, we discussed the great pains Capcom took in packing the graphic style and gameplay of the original Okami into a tiny DS Game Card. We also introduced the first of Chibiterasu's young companions: new characters who fight bestride him in battle and offer special abilities that can be combined with his own to clear the game's puzzle-filled dungeons. But Capcom has a few tricks left up its sleeve, and with Okamiden nearing its March 15 release date, it's time to take a deeper look at some of the game's subtler original elements.

Like the divine Amaterasu, Okamiden-hero Chibiterasu fights foes and interacts with the world by painting over reality with a Celestial Brush that a pantheon of Celestial Brush Gods have infused with abilities. This mechanic is a lot more precise in Okamiden than in Okami—on the Nintendo DS handheld you have the satisfying feedback of touching your Celestial Brush (aka your DS stylus) to the canvas of the Nintendo DS touch screen. This added layer of precision allows Chibiterasu to not only use virtually all of the techniques that Amaterasu learned in the original game, but to take advantage of subtle improvements in many of them. For example, you can now place cherry bombs at specific locations in 3D space by changing the size of the bombs, and the Powerslash technique can now be used to target enemy projectiles, knocking them back at the foes who unleashed them.

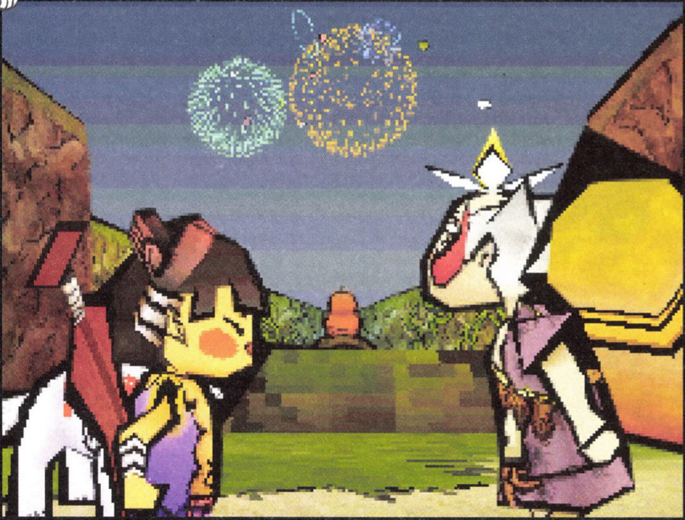
In addition to the upgraded repertoire from the first game, Chibiterasu can learn a few entirely new Celestial Brush techniques. A particularly interesting addition is the power of Polarity, taught by the great celestial whale Kyokugami. (Because whales have...what to do with magnetism, again?) When you draw a U on the touch screen, Chibiterasu can create a magnetic force that causes any nearby metal objects to move toward each other. An upside-down U will have the opposite effect, reversing polarity to push metal objects apart. In addition to serving as a component in some clever dungeon puzzles, these techniques can be used to great effect against metallic foes, scattering their segments after you sever them with your trusty Powerslash.

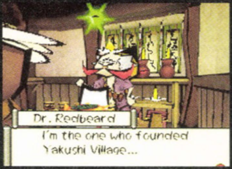
Another new addition to Okamiden is the ever-growing mountain village of Yakushi, which is founded early in the game by



Tama

There's no way I'm taking that stuff! ...*Cough* *Wheeze*

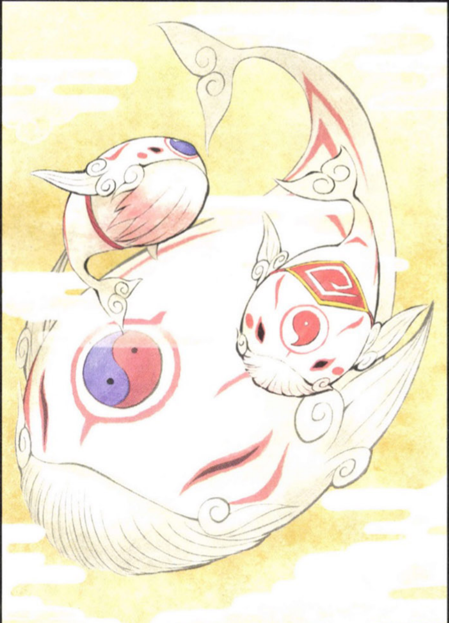




Dr. Redbeard

I'm the one who founded Yakushi Village...

[Above] Dr. Redbeard's name clearly should have been Dr. Redmoustache, but that's kind of a mouthful.

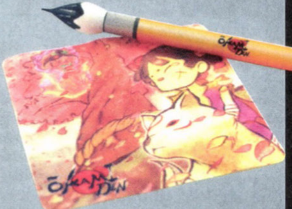


Kyokugami the celestial whale will teach you the Polarity brush technique.

OKAMIDEN'S CELESTIAL SWAG

Having trouble conceptualizing your slim DS stylus as a Celestial Brush? Preorder Okamiden at any Gamestop, and they'll throw in a thick Celestial Brush-shaped stylus and a screen-cleaning cloth featuring the adorable tag team of Chibiterasu and Kuni, the young Sun God's first human companion.

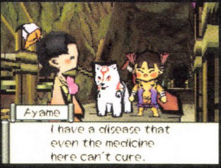
If that's not enough Okamiden merch for you, you can earn more—possibly—by visiting the Okami Facebook page and testing your mask-drawing skills with the Goblin Mask Facebook app. The game is based on a scene in Okamiden in which you use your stylus not so summon the power of the heavens, but merely to draw demonic-looking masks to use as a disguise while infiltrating a secret underground goblin marketplace. In the Facebook game, players draw the masks and then place them on the friends and pets in their Facebook photo albums. A committee of judges will pick the winners and award them loot-filled prize pack such as three different varieties of Chibiterasu plush toys! You can get in on the fun at www.facebook.com/Okami, but do so quickly: the submission deadline is January 3.



a small handful of vagabonds. As you progress through Chibiterasu's main quest, you can point homeless and adrift NPCs to Yakushi, where they'll set up new homes, gathering spots like hot-springs bath houses, and shops that sell exclusive items. One of the shops can upgrade your weapons, provided you're able to collect enough of the rare materials you earn by using your Celestial Brush techniques to defeat foes in particularly clever ways. Another shop deals in Secret Brush techniques (which were available only as hidden side-quest rewards in Okami); these allow you to use powerful special attacks, such as unleashing a firestorm by drawing the infinity symbol, or calling down lightning by penning a zigzagging bolt. The more the town's population increases, the more of these techniques will go up for sale. (Be forewarned, though: they don't come cheap.)

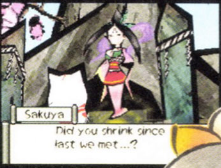
But Yakushi isn't all about commerce, and the side quests its inhabitants offer can serve as much more than mere distractions. One of Yakushi's first residents, for example, is a young girl who suffers from a disease that even the city's founding doctor can't cure. It's not within Chibiterasu's power to save her, but you can convince the doctor to make peace with Tama, the fireworks-maker from the original Okami, and provide him the ingredients he needs for his pyrotechnic displays. That won't cure the sickly girl, but at least the fireworks display will lift her sunken spirits. Yakushi storylines like this one are emblematic of Okamiden's heartfelt story, which focuses less on the series' grand mythology than did Okami, and more on the travails of individual characters. That's just one of several intriguing ways this warmer, cuter sequel sets itself apart from its acclaimed predecessor.

—CASEY L.



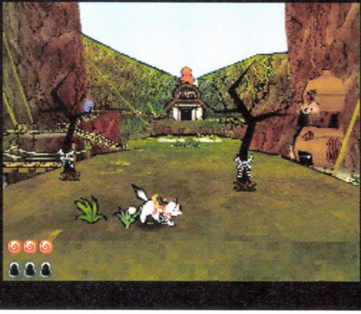
Ayame

I have a disease that even the medicine here can't cure.



Sakuya

Did you shrink since last we met...?



DS

PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
RELEASE: MARCH 2011

CONDUIT 2

Upgrade your fragging experience.

IT MAY NOT have been the best-ever first-person shooter on Wii, but 2009's The Conduit was a fairly ambitious game that did many things well. For example, the up-to-12-player online action is something few other Wii titles have matched. Fortunately, developer High Voltage Software is building on that solid foundation for Conduit 2. To prove it, the game makers faced us in the online arena, showing off all the new features between the fragging.

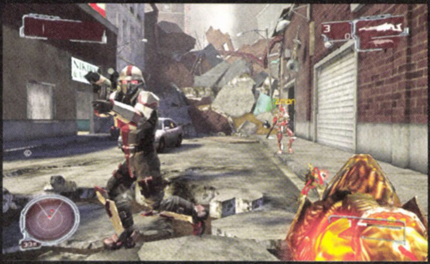
Before the competition could begin, however, we had to get suited up. There are a variety of character models—from a Trust Soldier to a Drudge Drone to protagonist Michael Ford himself—and a wide array of customization options for each body type. With the money you acquire by playing online, you can purchase new head, shoulder, arm, torso, or knee armor, as well as the all-important weapons and upgrades. As in the first game, the weapons range from the traditional—assault rifles and shotguns—to the more fantastical, such as the Phase Rifle (a sniper rifle that can be used to target and shoot enemies through physical objects) or the Hive Cannon (a gun that shoots explosive Para-Mite larvae).

The upgrades are similar to the Perks from the Call of Duty titles. You can equip powers such as Supercharger (which improves your overall movement speed) and Field Medicine (which allows you to revive teammates and be revived by teammates twice as fast as normal; you have a window of opportunity to be revived by an ally after being downed, assuming your opponents don't shoot you while you're on the ground). The latter upgrade proves especially important during the team battles—VIP, for instance, wherein you are tasked with killing a specific target on the other team; and Annexation, in which you earn points for capturing the control points scattered across the map.

We've had a lot of fun with Conduit 2's multiplayer so far. If it's indicative of the quality we can expect from the game as a whole, February can't come soon enough. —**JUSTIN C.**

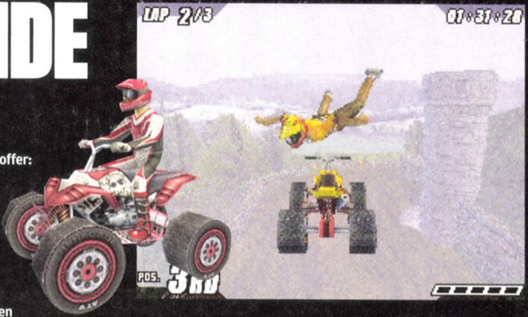
Wii **PUBLISHER: SEGA**
DEVELOPER: HIGH VOLTAGE SOFTWARE
RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 2011

[Below] Money can go toward making yourself look as cool as this guy.



ATV WILD RIDE

Take a ride on the wild side.



ATV GAMES ARE harsh mistresses, balancing their potential for (extreme!) fun with the genre's long history of mediocre releases. Fortunately, fans of ATV racing have reason to hope for a little risen cream, as ATV Wild Ride is the work of highly regarded developer Renegade Kid (of Dementium and Moon fame). Will that pedigree pay off? Our test play suggests it just might.

The preview build we played includes a commendable bag of features. Players begin by selecting from eight riders and eight ATVs (most of the choices must be unlocked via gameplay). The ATVs, in addition to offering cosmetic variety, are rated based on top speed, acceleration, and handling. (If you're as crash-prone as I am, you're likely to prioritize acceleration to recover from all those dead stops.) Once monikered and mounted, players choose between single- and multiplayer modes. (Multiplayer requires that each participant own a copy of the game.) Four race scenarios are on offer: World Tour, comprising four multi-race international tours spanning several difficulties; Quick Race, in which players may choose any unlocked track then specify the number of racers, CPU skill level, and race style (i.e., whether the last-place racer is eliminated at the end of each lap); Freestyle, in which the goal is to earn the most points by nailing creative and varied tricks; and Time Trial, in which players race alone against the clock for the glory of lap and race records. Local (non-Internet) leaderboards track the results and provide fodder for bragging rights.

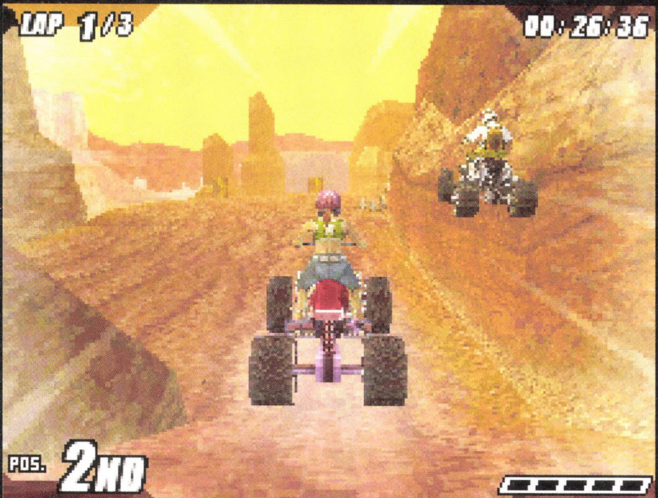
LAP 2/3
00:59:80
POS. 3RD

What we've played so far is promising, starting with the game's central mechanic: completing tricks earns you nitros. This link between stunts and speed provides players with an excellent excuse to cut lose (it's difficult to win without nitros) while rewarding strategic play (if you don't *need* nitros, it's perhaps best to keep your feet out of your armpits). Track design, animation, and control also appear solid across a varied assortment of internationally themed tracks.

—PATRICK C.

DS

PUBLISHER: DESTINEER
DEVELOPER: RENEGADE KID
RELEASE DATE: JANUARY 2011



LAP 3/3
02:27:3
1ST

Courses will take you around the globe to countries such as Canada, England, Thailand, and Russia.

LAP 1/3
00:05:06
3RD

BY **CHRIS SLATE**

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO** DEVELOPER: **SQUARE ENIX** RELEASE: **FEBRUARY 2011** Wii

FOUR-SPORT HERO

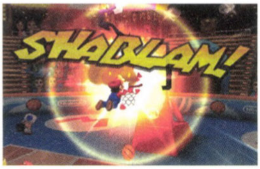
Nintendo's popular plumber tests his athletic abilities in all-new ways with **Mario Sports Mix**.

We've spent weeks playing Mario's new brands of basketball, hockey, dodgeball, and volleyball, and so far we're having a blast. While past multi-sport packages have delivered dubious results, we're happy to say that Mario Sports Mix is a cut above; the quality of the collection is on par with the plumber's better solo-sports efforts. What's really nice is that the developers at Square Enix have struck a good balance between the over-the-top Mario-ness of these kinds of games and the core appeal of the four sports. This wasn't the case with Square Enix's only previous Mario sports title, the lackluster Mario Hoops 3-on-3 for the Nintendo DS system, in which a heavy focus on coin collecting and item use got in the way of a good game of basketball. Now sports fans can enjoy the basics of the games they love while still blowing up the other team with the occasional Bob-omb.

In addition to the many game screens and impressions in this giant-sized 10-page feature, there's still a lot more to see—plenty of levels, characters, and modes that Nintendo is keeping under wraps. We'll have a full review soon, but for now, just know that if you're a fan of even one of these four sports, you'll want to keep a very close eye on Mario Sports Mix.

BASKETBALL

Mario Sports Mix offers a fun take on arcade-style basketball that, while similar to the recently released NBA Jam with its ridiculously high-flying dunks, is quite a bit different from its Wii console b-ball cousin. Skilled competitors will make it very difficult for you to get open for a dunk or a three-pointer, but there are plenty of options at your command to help you score in either situation. If your dunk is in danger of being blocked at the rim, switch to a layup—although a quick-fingered defender could swat that, too. A dash or spin will get you around a defender for an open jump shot—but with no goaltending rule, anyone between you and the hoop could intercept it. There's a yin for every yang, which makes basketball one of the more grueling, but enjoyable, sports in the package.



The key to success is spacing—moving your characters around to create a hole in the defense. Careless passes are automatically stolen if they come in contact with another character, which further strengthens the need for good ball movement. So although you won't be calling any plays or substituting players from the bench, the core gameplay is rooted in good basketball fundamentals. But when traditional basketball smarts aren't enough to get the job done, you can always punch holes in the D with a Koopa shell, take an Item Shot, or pull off a character's unique Special Move.

CONTROLS

Control Stick: Move character; double-tap a direction to dash

Wii Remote Gestures: Lift to jump, flick to shoot (hold B while shooting for an Item Shot); while running near the basket, shake remote to dunk

Lift to jump and block a shot, flick again to block a dunk

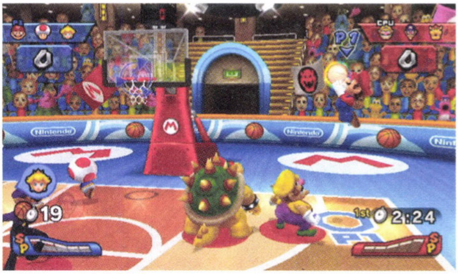
A Button: Pass (hold to initiate an alley-oop); steal; tap to block a layup (after jumping)

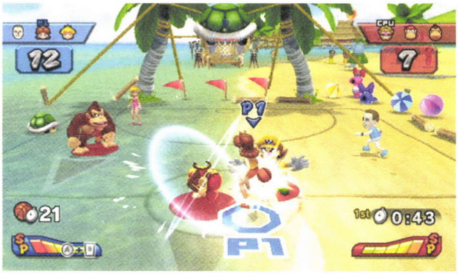
B Button: Use item

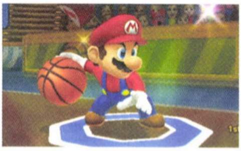
C Button: Swap characters

Z Button: Spin move (on offense)

A+B Buttons: Special Move

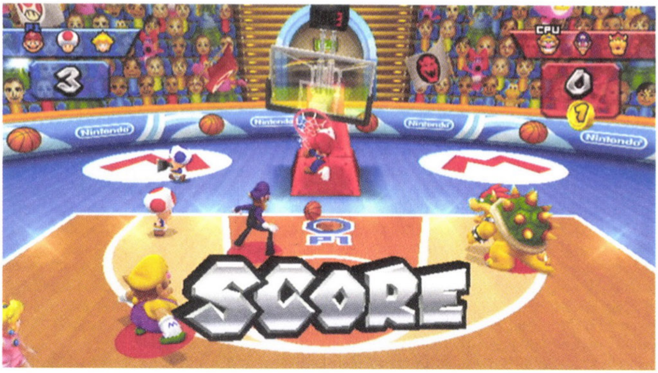






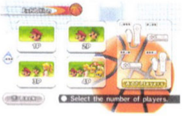
27
15
2nd 0:43

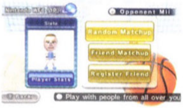
27
11
2nd 0:50
P1


CPU
3
0
SCORE
P1

[Above] The on-court action is ridiculously over-the-top while still delivering a satisfying game of basketball.

CPU
2
0
21
1st 2:22
SHOOT
P1


1P
2P
3P
4P
Select the number of players.


Opponent Mii
Random Matchup
Friend Matchup
Register Friend
Player Stats
Play with people from all over you

GET THE GANG TOGETHER

Sports games are almost always best when played with pals, and Mario Sports Mix is packed with many multiplayer options that will have you and your friends saying "just one more game" late into the night.

Co-Op and Head-to-Head

Up to four players can choose to play against each other or join the same side with two- or three-man teams.

Play Online

Mario Sports Mix supports online matches between two Wii systems, and each Wii can have up to two players. You can challenge both friends and unknown competitors for around-the-clock action.

Party Modes

While we can't reveal any of these just yet, these sports-themed bonus games are even faster and more frantic than the four main sports.

HOCKEY

CONTROLS

Control Stick: Move character; press left or right to aim shot

Wii Remote Gestures: Shoot (hold B while shooting for an Item Shot); check; intercept a shot

A Button: Pass (hold to initiate a one-timer)

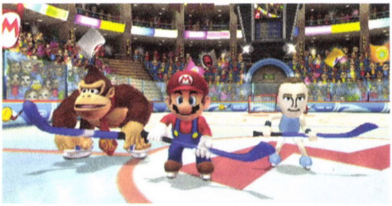
B Button: Use item

C Button: Swap characters

Z Button: Charge a power shot; make goalie dive to block puck

A+B Buttons: Special Move

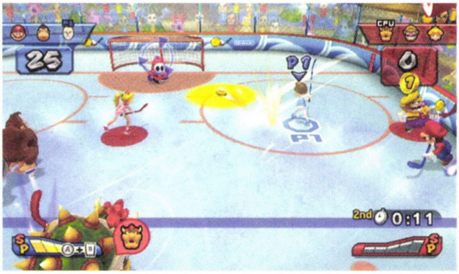
So far, hockey is one of our favorite sports in the collection because its rapid pace makes for intense multiplayer competitions. Due to a shortened rink and lax rules (there's no icing, for instance) the games are always high scoring, although there's still a decent amount to do on the defensive end. Characters often won't give up the puck on the first or even second check attempt, so you have to hammer away at them until they cough it up. Sometimes a scuffle breaks out, and since there are no penalties, the puck goes to the player who can shake the Wii Remote with the most fury.

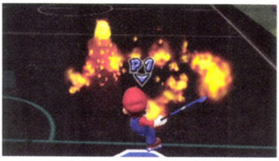


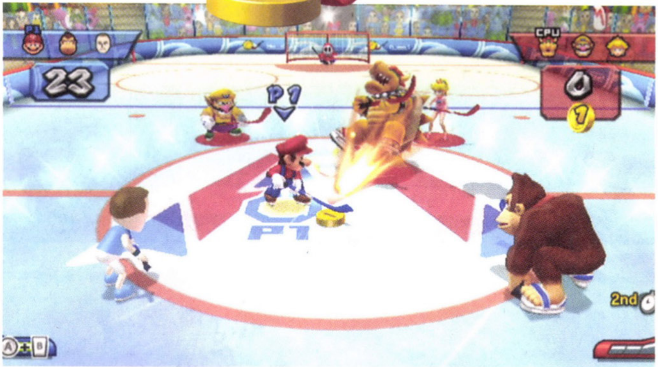
It's super-cool to play with your Mii alongside Nintendo's stars.

Shy Guys take the role of goalies (they already had the masks) and are always computer controlled, although the player can press Z to make a goalie dive to block a shot if he's caught out of position. Goalies aren't used on every stage, however. For example, when playing at Peach's Castle, only intermittent jets of water protect the goals. Stage types also dictate whether the characters play on skates or rollerblades.

As with basketball, proper spacing between teammates is important. Passes are often intercepted—especially long ones—because clear passing lanes can be difficult to find. And although power shots are great at getting through to the goal, the opposing team often won't leave you alone long enough to charge one up. One of the most useful strategies is to set up one-timers, where a character waits for a pass at an open spot and then takes a quick shot the second he receives the puck. Pulling off a one-timer with a friend while playing co-op is about the coolest thing you can do in this sport.





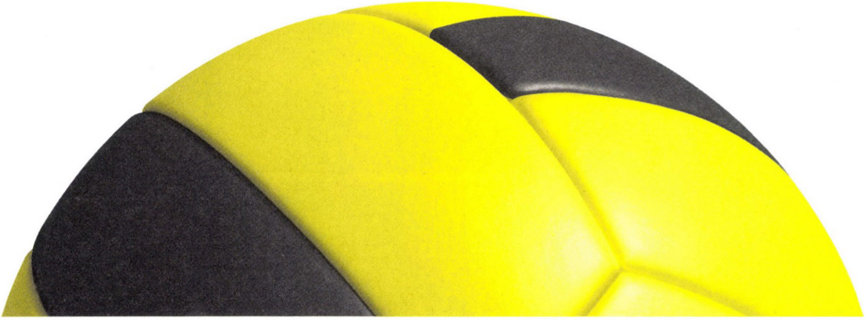


[Above] A well-timed swipe of the Wii Remote controller is all that's needed to win the puck in a face-off. However, if you charge up by holding the A Button before the puck is dropped, you can take the puck with force.

CONGRATULATIONS!

TOURNAMENT PLAY

While multiplayer exhibition matches will monopolize most players' time, everyone will want to tackle tournaments to unlock new characters and stages, and to discover the resolution to the game's storyline. Like in the Mario Kart games, each tournament consists of a series of competitions played across multiple locations, with the eventual winner receiving a cup. Each sport has three standard tournaments of increasing difficulty—the Mushroom Cup, Flower Cup, and Star Cup—to keep you busy for quite a while.



DODGEBALL

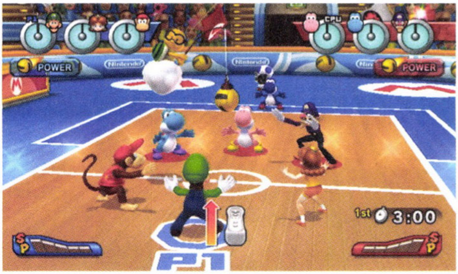
CONTROLS

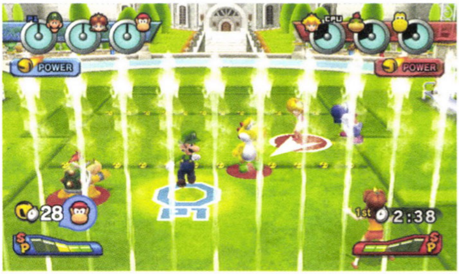
Control Stick: Move character
Wii Remote Gestures: Attack (hold B while shaking for an Item Attack; hold the Control Pad while shaking for a fake out); diving catch; dodge roll
A Button: Pass (hold to initiate a combo jumping attack); steal pass
B Button: Use item
C Button: Swap characters
Z Button: Not used
A+B Buttons: Catch; Special Move

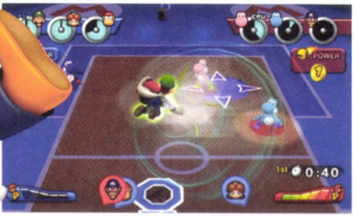
Dodgeball is more of a gym-class activity than a full-fledged sport, but it has a history of making for good video games, dating back to the NES cult-classic Super Dodgeball. Characters move freely on their side of the court, alternately throwing the ball at opponents and dodging return attacks. If the ball hits a character and then drops to the ground, that character's stamina is depleted—once it's all gone, the character must leave the court. A team wins when every member of the opposing team has been knocked out. Or if time expires, the team with the most active members earns the victory.

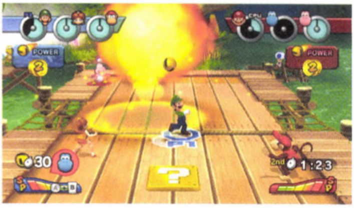
More so than the other sports, the tide can quickly turn in dodgeball. A character that has left the court can still attack opponents from specified areas out of bounds, and if he knocks an opponent out of the game, he will rejoin his teammates on the court. Add in the fact that throws can be caught, and that passes to out-of-bounds players can be intercepted, and dodgeball provides what is perhaps the wildest action of the collection's four sports.

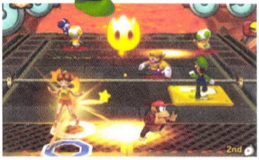
Dodgeball may be the sport that benefits the most from competing against human opponents, as well. Unless you're playing the computer on an easier setting, it's fairly hard to land a hit with a straightforward attack because—if your opponent is expecting it—the ball is very easy to catch. Mixing up different approaches is an essential part of the mind game that is required to keep the other team guessing until they make a wrong move and leave themselves open.

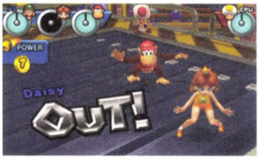


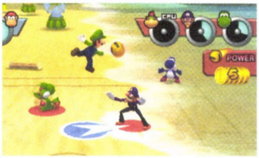


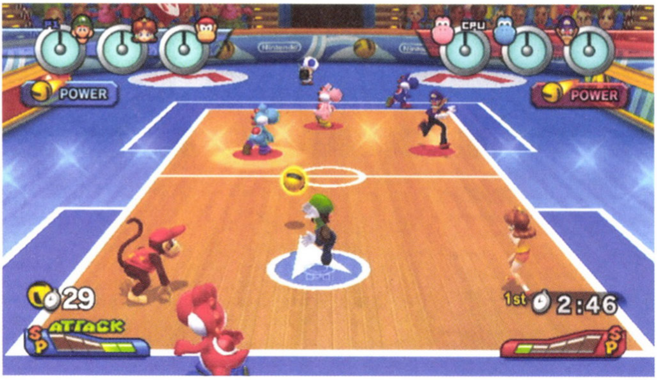












[Above] The worst thing you can do in dodgeball is turn your back on an opponent (we're looking at you, Yoshi). If you're not in position to catch the ball, your only hope is to roll away with a quick shake of the Wii Remote.

GAME CHANGERS

These franchise-favorite items can be found in ? blocks that appear randomly on the ground in all four Mario Sports Mix games, and are used to trip up opponents or supercharge scoring attempts.

Banana
Any character that comes into contact with this slippery obstacle will fall down, leaving a temporary hole in their team's defense.

Bob-omb
With its large blast radius, a well-aimed Bob-omb can take down multiple opponents.

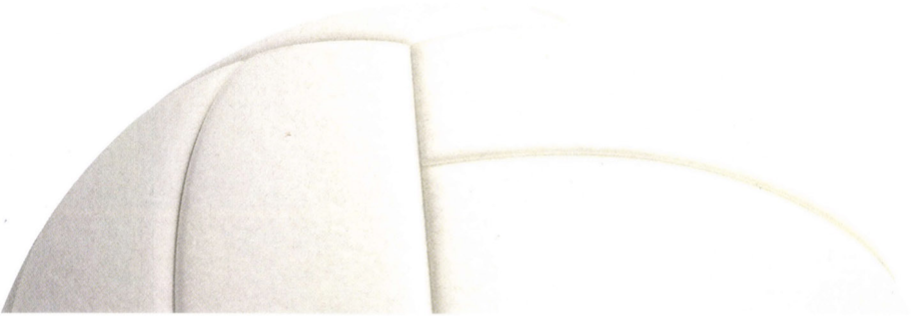
Coin
Any coins that you collect are exchanged for extra points the next time you score, except in dodgeball, where coins multiply the power of your throws instead.

Green Shell
Simply slide one along the ground toward an opponent and laugh as he gets knocked on his butt.

Mini Mushroom
Sudden shrinkage makes a character much less effective.

Red Shell
As Mario Kart fans would guess, a Red Shell finds its target easier than the green variety.

Star
Triggering a star makes the entire team invulnerable to attack.



VOLLEYBALL

CONTROLS

Control Stick: Move character; aim spike

Wii Remote Gestures: Jump; receive; block; spike (hold B while spiking for an Item Spike); Flick down then up for an underhand serve; flick up then down for an overhand serve

A Button: Fake a spike; hold to initiate a combo spike

B Button: Use item

C Button: Swap characters

Z Button: Not used

A+B Buttons: Special Move

Like the other events in this collection, the Mario Sports Mix version of volleyball takes a simplified approach to the sport, amplified by the usual Mario wackiness. Since many people aren't as familiar with volleyball as they are with basketball or hockey, we'll go into a little more detail about the general gameplay.

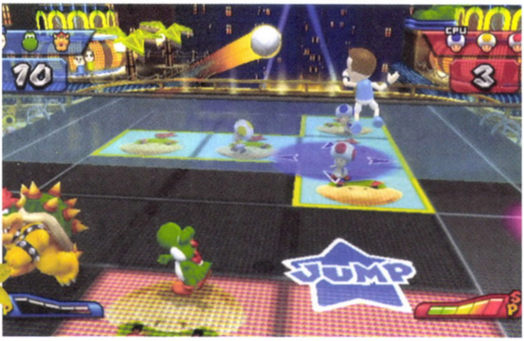
When the ball is served (either under- or overhanded, depending on how the remote is swung), a member of the opposing team gets in position to receive the ball. He hits the ball to a teammate, who knocks it high into the air near the net so that another teammate can spike it. You score a point if the ball hits the ground on the opposing team's side, but they get a point if you hit it out of bounds. A colored circle on the ground shows where the ball will land, and if a character reaches the circle before the ball gets there, he will automatically hit the ball to a teammate or jump to perform a spike. (Auto-jumping can be turned off if the player prefers full manual control). You can't bat the ball between teammates more than twice before trying to score.

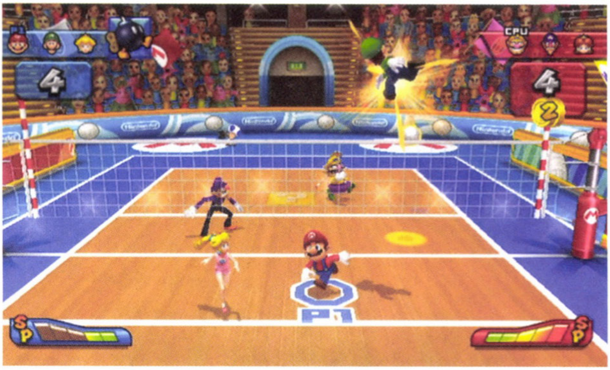
In serves and spikes, there is a trade-off between acting quickly with a speedier shot and taking the time to properly aim. The key is to target a hole in the opponent's defense; an open, unguarded spot on their side of the court. Doing this against a three-character team is naturally more difficult than when the game is two-on-two, making the difference between the two modes more pronounced in this event than in the others.

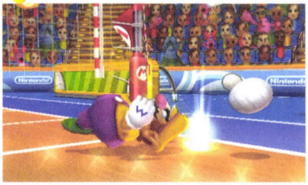
One handy tip is to hold off on using a Special Move until faced with a spike that you won't be able to reach. Because Special Moves draw the ball in from anywhere, they can save you from losing a point while simultaneously giving you a great opportunity to gain one.

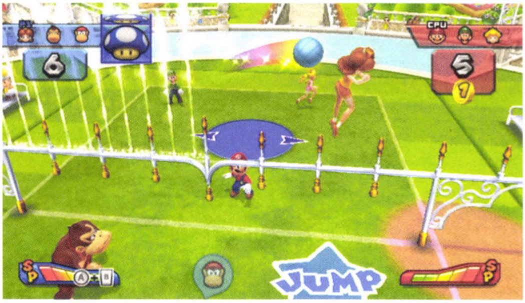
10
CPU
11
P1
SP
SP

P1
CPU
4
P1
SP
SP





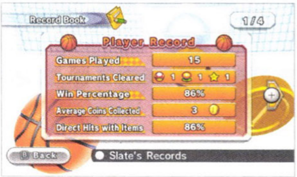




[Above] Just as characters play above the rim in basketball, they soar high above the net in volleyball. The closer to the net you hit the ball, the less time the other team has to react.

COOL EXTRAS

Further filling what is already a pretty stuffed package, Mario Sports Mix comes with interactive tutorials that helpfully demonstrate the rules and controls of each sport. There is also a record book that tracks a long list of stats, from the number of games played and tournaments cleared to the number of direct hits you've landed with items.



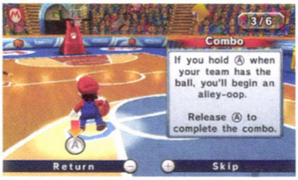
Record Book 1/4

Player Record

Games Played	15
Tournaments Cleared	1 1 1
Win Percentage	86%
Average Coins Collected	3
Direct Hits with Items	86%

Back

Slate's Records



3/6

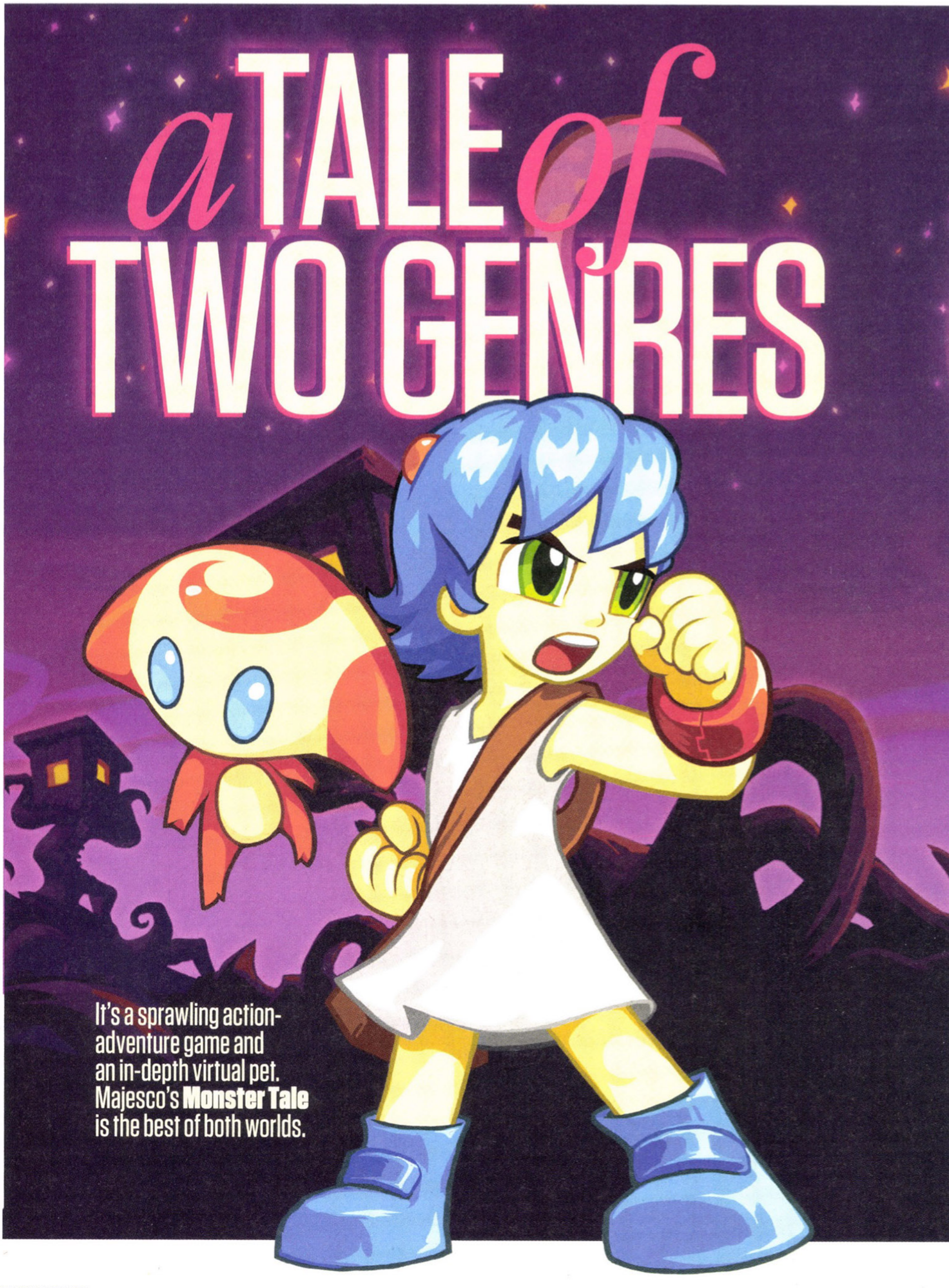
Combo

If you hold Ⓐ when your team has the ball, you'll begin an alley-oop.

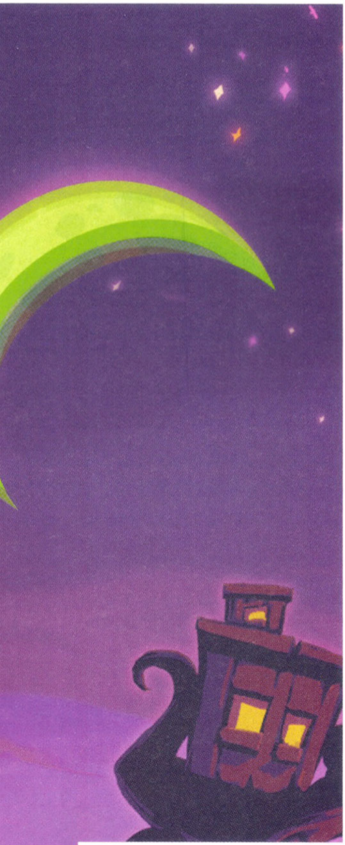
Release Ⓐ to complete the combo.

Return Skip

a TALE *of* TWO GENRES



It's a sprawling action-adventure game and an in-depth virtual pet. Majesco's **Monster Tale** is the best of both worlds.



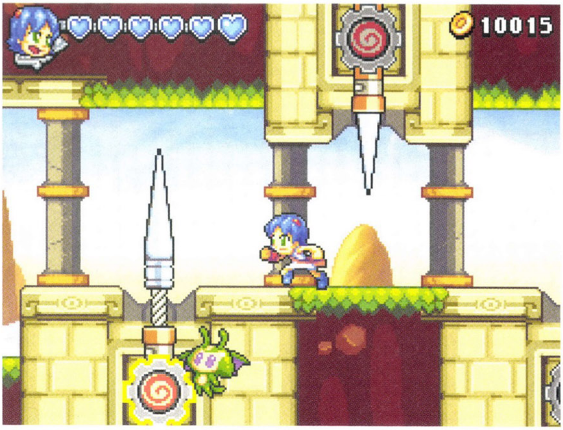
Everyone knows that an epic adventure is always more enjoyable when you have a sidekick along for the journey. That's even truer if that sidekick is supercute, and truer still if that adorable sidekick can also bring the pain to your enemies. The developers at DreamRift, the minds behind the quirky Nintendo DS handheld game Henry Hatsworth in the Puzzling Adventure, have given us just such an adventure in Monster Tale. At first glance, this upcoming DS title appears to be an adventure game that draws inspiration from the Metroid series, but shortly after you start playing, things get more involved when you adopt a monster of your very own. We've talked about Monster Tale in recent issues, but now we've had the opportunity to thoroughly explore the first several hours of the game. What we've seen is very promising.

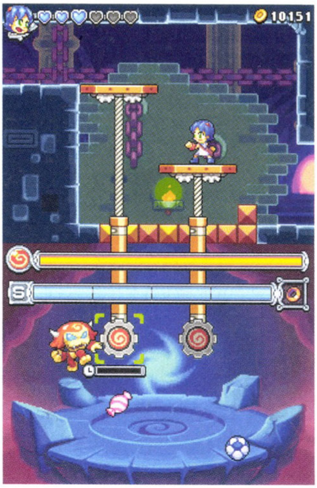
A FINE START

The story begins with our hero, a young girl named Ellie, waking up in a strange land. Despite being named the Ruins, the immediate area is fairly pleasant-looking. Unfortunately, Ellie has no idea where she is or how she came to be there. Given video game tradition, you would be forgiven for immediately guiding Ellie to the right, but you'll quickly encounter a locked door. A glowing button seems like the way to open the door, but it's out of reach and Ellie has no way to attack it. By traveling back to the left past the starting point, you discover a mysterious statue that glows in reaction to Ellie's bracelet. Standing on the statue produces an orb that grants Ellie her first new ability—the Band Blaster, which allows her to fire energy blasts from her bracelets. (Obviously, this is the key to getting through that locked door.)

Once through, you continue further into the world. Although you encounter a couple of tiny enemies, things are pretty peaceful at first. The main obstacles are some carefully arranged platforms that help you perfect Ellie's jumping ability. At one point you will notice something that stands out a bit—a large gear emblazoned with a bright red swirl. Nothing you do seems to affect it, so you're forced to abandon it until later. This will be a common occurrence throughout the adventure. Like in Metroid, there are many

[Right] Sometimes there's more for Chomp to do in the Pet Sanctuary than simply consume items.





BY PHIL THEOBALD

PUBLISHER: MAJESCO DEVELOPER: DREAMRIFT RELEASE: MARCH 2011

DS

areas that you will not be able to access until you discover a particular item or power-up.

FORGING A FRIENDSHIP

Eventually you happen upon a chamber that contains a large egg sitting on a pedestal. Strangely, the egg sports a somewhat familiar red swirl. Ellie, not wanting to disturb this new land, will not interact with the egg (and yes, we know you're going to try to blast it). When you attempt to leave the room, however, the egg begins to twitch. Cracks appear on it, and it shatters open. What emerges from the busted shell is a small, flying creature. Despite Ellie's pleas for the critter to remain behind, the little guy takes a shine to her. She names the adorable beast Chomp, and the two immediately become friends.

At this point, the bottom screen of the DS lights up to reveal an area known as the Pet Sanctuary. When floating alongside Ellie, Chomp will help her fight enemy monsters. If his health dips too low, though, a quick tap of the X Button sends Chomp to the Pet Sanctuary where he can recharge. Now when you return to the room with the swirl-marked gear, Chomp will activate it, causing a block to slide out of the wall. Ellie can hop on the block and reach a new part of the stage.

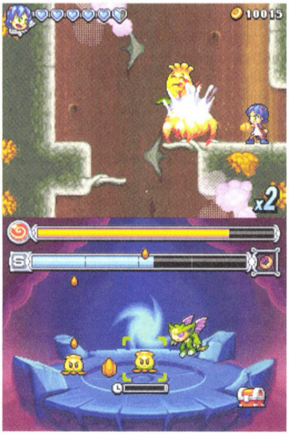
Not long after, Ellie becomes trapped in a room. She cannot leave until she obtains three Pet Items—special goodies that, when collected, fall into the Pet Sanctuary where Chomp can interact with them to boost his vital statistics (Stamina, Attack, Defense, Speed, and Intellect) or use them as weapons. The items also give Chomp experience points, and when he earns enough points, he gains a level and becomes more powerful.

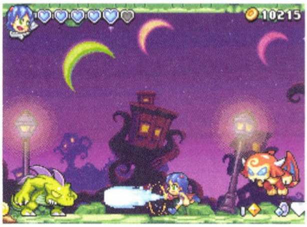
The Pet Items from the locked room are enough to bump Chomp up to the next level—and just in time; the duo encounters trouble as they try to leave. Out of nowhere, a pair of giant purple claws appears in the background. They belong to an equally giant two-headed dragon. The creature starts to strike at Ellie with its fangs, and it quickly becomes clear that the poor girl cannot damage the monster. Observant players will note that while one head is attacking, the other opens its mouth to reveal a glowing green spot. Video game law tells us that this is the beast's weak point, and only Chomp can strike it. While Chomp attacks, Ellie must continue to dodge the "active" dragon head. Occasionally, the "weak" dragon head will lower its neck into the Pet Sanctuary. When this happens, it's time to send Chomp down there to attack. (This is a good demonstration of the fact that Monster Tale's action is not always relegated to the top screen. Sometimes Chomp will have to drop into the Pet Sanctuary to activate switches for Ellie, as well.)

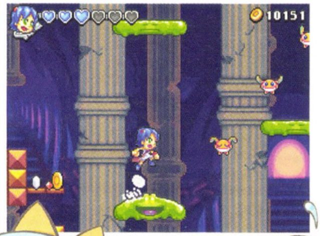
After defeating the dragon, Chomp learns his first skill, Torpedo—a special move that can be activated at any time to help Ellie get past enemies and obstacles. In addition to skills, throughout the adventure Chomp can also earn power-ups dubbed traits. When you assign traits to Chomp, they permanently boost his stats.

OF MONSTERS AND MEN

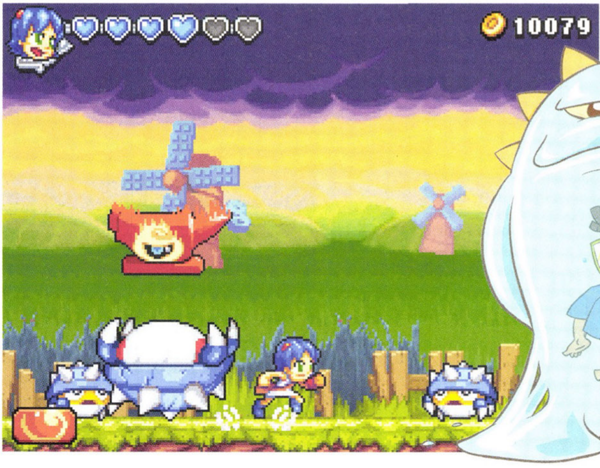
With the first boss out of the way, Ellie and Chomp can resume exploring. As you progress, you will discover more orb-bearing statues that add new moves to Ellie's repertoire. Mastering the orbs' skills is essential to finding your way through the mazelike world. As you proceed, be sure to keep an eye out for a fellow named Jinx. Although he looks like a diminutive demon, he actually runs several shops throughout the land. If you're diligent about collecting the gold dropped by defeated monsters, you can trade

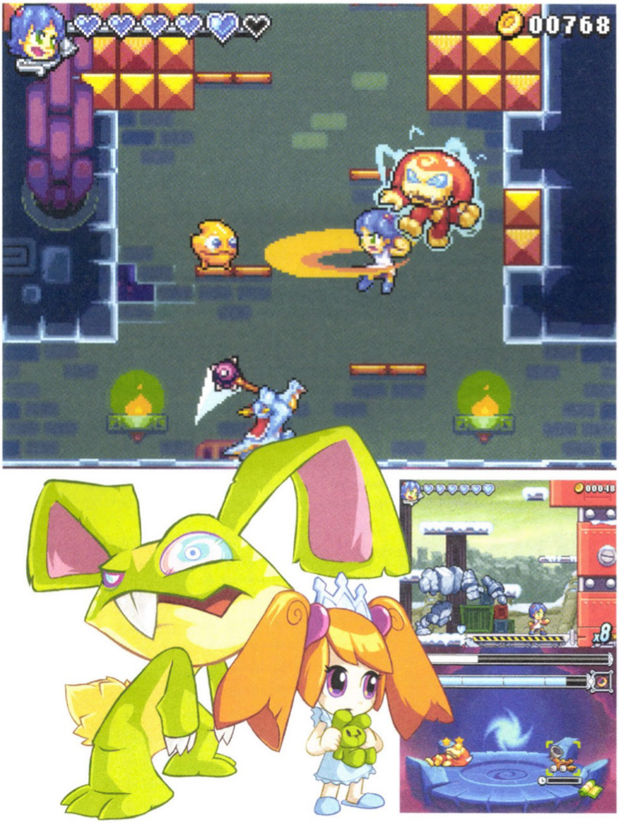






[Below] These enemies are crunchy on the ouside, but chewy and vulnerable underneath.





it to Jinx for all sorts of useful items that can be used by either Ellie or Chomp.

Over the course of the game, you will encounter one more way to increase Chomp's skills—evolution. At the start of the game, Chomp is in his default Foundling form. Although basic, this form has well-rounded abilities. Eventually, new evolutionary forms will be unlocked and you'll be free to switch between them at will to best take advantage of their individual powers. Be aware that each form begins at Level 1. You'll need to earn experience points for each one if you want to exploit them to their fullest. It's also worth noting that each form can have its own skill-set assignment. This allows you to customize each of Chomp's forms for specific situations.

You'll want to create your ideal Chomp as soon as possible. After traveling through the Ruins, you'll fight through the rocky Caverns and into an underground night club called the Scratch Pit. Here you'll come face to face with the first human character. At first, Ellie is excited to meet this young boy who calls himself Meade. Meade, however, is not at all pleased to see Ellie. He accuses Ellie of infiltrating the "holding area" and stealing the "fabled beast." It becomes clear that Meade doesn't treat monsters as friends like Ellie does. Instead he sees them as objects to be manipulated. Meade has taken control of a scary-looking monster named Krubble, and he vows never to return home. In this world, Meade explains, he is king!

With that, Meade hops on Krubble's back and launches his attack. Under Meade's orders, Krubble breathes fire and lays eggs that hatch into one-eyed, sphere-shooting creatures. Meade also causes stage lights to fall from overhead, spreading waves of fire on the ground. With so much happening at once, you'll have to use both Ellie and Chomp's offensive capabilities to their fullest. Just be sure to send Chomp down to the Pet Sanctuary for a rest when his energy runs low. If the little guy gets knocked out, it takes a little while for him to recover and get back into the action. In this intense fight, you don't have any time to waste.

THE BEST FOR YOUR PET

Items will be automatically transferred to the Pet Sanctuary, where Chomp can use them to increase his experience, boost his statistics (Stamina, Attack, Defense, Speed, and Intellect), and gain other benefits. Here are some of the items you'll encounter.

SOCCER BALL

Chomp knocks the soccer ball onto the top screen toward Ellie, where it bounces around smashing into enemies.

CATAPULT

This device launches massive objects onto the top screen at various angles, dealing big damage to foes.

BICYCLE

Exercising with the bicycle will improve Chomp's speed.

SOAP

Soap keeps your pet monster clean to make sure he stays happy and in top condition.

BOOK

Reading books increases Chomp's intelligence.

TREASURE CHEST

It takes awhile for Chomp to unlock each treasure chest, but the effort pays off: many different goodies may await inside.

VIDEO GAME

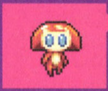
Video games in the Monster World may act differently than in the human world. They may even come to life to help out our heroes!

DUMBBELL

Your monster can work out with the dumbbell in the Pet Sanctuary to build his strength.

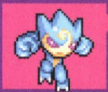
YOU SAY YOU WANT AN EVOLUTION

In addition to being a great friend, the lovable Chomp quickly proves himself a valuable asset to Ellie on her adventure. He becomes even more useful once he begins to evolve into different forms. Here are just a few of the several shapes Chomp will take during the game.



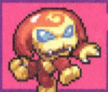
FOUNDLING

Chomp's default form. It's fast and has balanced abilities, but it doesn't excel in any particular attribute.



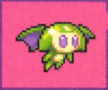
BOMBARDIER

This well-rounded form allows Chomp to transform into a giant exploding bomb that blasts a large area for big damage.



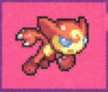
SENTINEL

This hulking form is very strong, but Chomp's speed suffers. Sentinel Chomp also harnesses the elemental power of fire, making this form extra effective against enemies that have a weakness to flame.



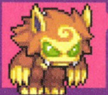
REPELLER

Chomp's wings allow him to zoom around at high speeds. He can also create a shield that protects Ellie from incoming enemy attacks.



BALLISTA

Chomp grows a bit taller and looks fiercer. This form also increases Chomp's defensive capabilities and his ability to use projectile attacks to strike from a distance.



SASQUATCH

This big brute has massive power and can even heal Ellie, but is slower than other forms.

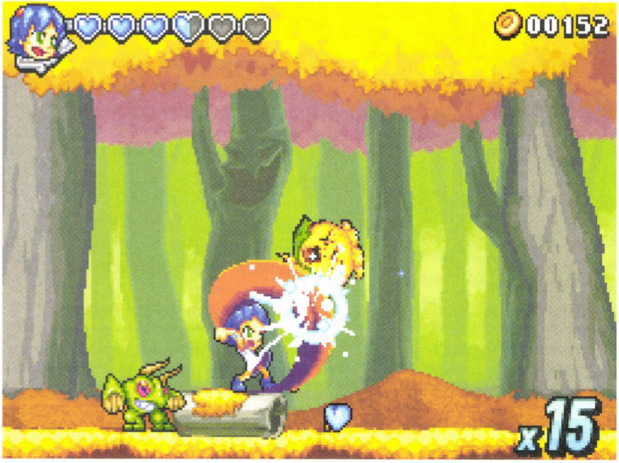
LIFE'S A BEACH

Having defeated Meade, Ellie can move on to a couple of new areas: the Beach and the Aqueducts (a water temple of sorts). These serene-looking areas are a pleasant change from the rocky caverns and the dank Scratch Pit. Don't get too comfortable, though. The enemies here are much fiercer than those you've previously encountered. You'll face shield- and boomerang-wielding monsters, giant stone golems, and crabs that can be defeated only with Ellie's Launcher Attack. Despite the danger, you must explore on, as this is where you'll find a couple of Ellie's most useful techniques: the Wall Grab (which allows her to scale walls) and Burst Cancel (a melee/shot combo that's perfect for taking out armored foes).

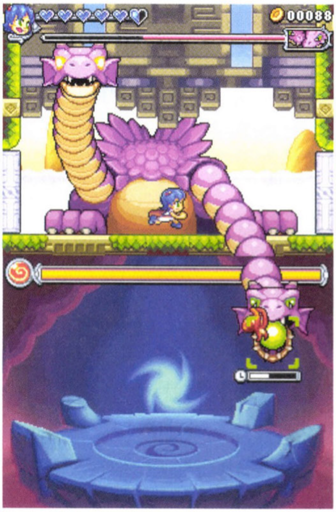
Soon you'll venture into an underwater fortress called the Tubeworqs, but you won't be able to get very far at first. You must unlock a series of three doors before proceeding, and to do so you must head back to the Aqueducts area to search for the switches. Although the game's map is usually quite generous with keeping you informed of where your next objective is, the locations of the switches are not displayed. It's up to you to find them.

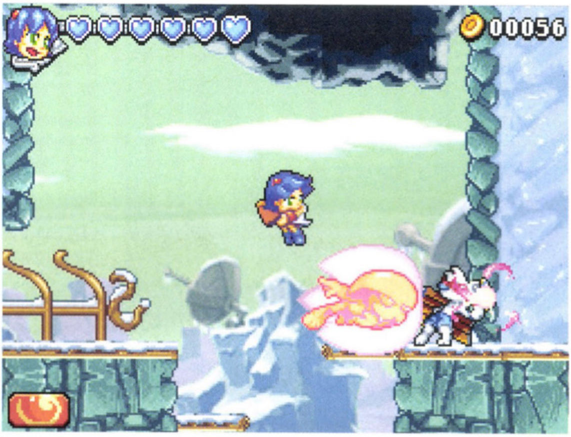
When you do open all three doors, you can head into the Tubeworqs proper. Here you find Ellie's powerful Beam weapon, which is just as good at opening certain locks as it is blasting monsters. In fact, there's a locked door back in the Scratch Pit that requires this weapon to unlock. Returning to that area will net you the Down Smash maneuver, which can break through solid rock. You'll also use this move to fight a new monster: a massive enemy crab you first must flip onto its back with the Launcher Attack before dealing massive damage with the Down Smash.

From here the map tells you to return to the Tubeworqs, where the Down Smash move will open up a new area. En route to the Tubeworqs,



[Above] Ellie enjoys Chomp's help, but she's no damsel in distress. Her powerful attacks can send a monster running.





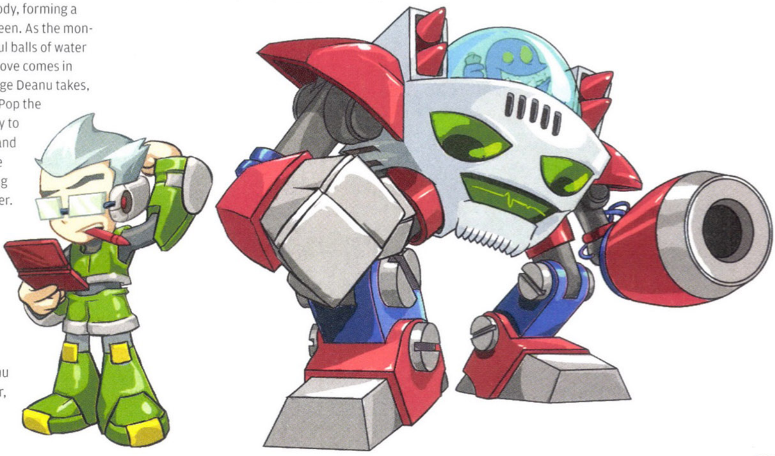
[Left] Some monsters may think they'll escape harm by moving out of Ellie's reach. Fools! Just send Chomp after 'em.

a slight detour reveals a promising new area called the Grumpkin Patch. Although we didn't get far before encountering a locked door, we were intrigued by the slightly spooky music and ominous windmills turning in the background.

A REAL WORQOUT

In the Tubeworqs you will face off against the next boss—another young boy who has crowned himself king. This boy's name is Deanu, and he controls a creature made of water. Before attacking, Deanu reveals a brief plot point. He tells Ellie that he has been warned about her by someone named Queen Priscilla. Undoubtedly, we will learn more about the queen as the plot unfolds. There's no time to worry about that now, though, as Deanu begins his attack. The water monster encases Deanu inside its liquid body, forming a bubble that floats around the screen. As the monster hovers about, it tosses painful balls of water at Ellie. Chomp's Vertical Spike move comes in very handy here. The more damage Deanu takes, the smaller his bubble becomes. Pop the bubble, and Deanu falls helplessly to the ground. Occasionally Deanu and his monster will fall down into the Pet Sanctuary and begin attacking upward with powerful jets of water. While Ellie dodges the assault, Chomp must go to the sanctuary to counterattack. Deanu's final attack has him partially flooding the top screen. Luckily, Ellie's Wall Grab move allows her to stay dry until the water recedes. With Ellie and Chomp's patience and perseverance, Deanu proves to be no match for the pair, and he goes down.

Even through so much has happened already, this is just the beginning of Monster Tale. There are many more hidden chambers to discover, items to collect, and moves to learn, and before the journey is over you'll get to visit a variety of additional locations, including a twisted treehouse, an underwater fortress, a monster express train, and the ultimate stronghold of power within the monster world. With so much more to see, we anticipate Monster Tale will keep us engaged for a long time. We're counting the moments until we get to continue Ellie and Chomp's quest to find a way back home.



Monster Master

What will happen next to the dynamic duo of Ellie and Chomp? Only one person knows for sure: **Peter Ong**, the co-owner of DreamRift and the director of Monster Tale. We recently spoke with Ong to find out more about the game and get the behind-the-scenes story of its development.

NINTENDO POWER The last time we saw Monster Tale (and the last time Nintendo Power talked to you about the game) was right around E3. How has the game progressed or evolved since then?

PETER ONG You could definitely say that Chomp has "evolved." There are now a lot more forms in the game into which he can grow. The game has really been fleshed out with a lot more of everything, including more bosses, environments, enemies, and moves.

We noticed that the save rooms got redesigned, as did the projectile energy refills. What was the reason for that? Did anything else change?

With the save rooms, our art director, Michael Veroni, thought that they would fit in better with the theme of the game as a legendary "tale" if the save rooms were a sort of library. The energy-refill pickups were changed to stand out more and draw the player's eye to it.

We're constantly seeking to improve upon what's in the game. Everything is evaluated at different points to see if it's working as well as it can with the rest of the game, and when something can be better, we do our best to make it so with the time we have. You'll probably see other changes for the better if you pay close attention (and it looks like you have!) as the game nears completion.

The game was originally slated for a holiday 2010 release, but now it's coming in early 2011. What was the reason for the delay?

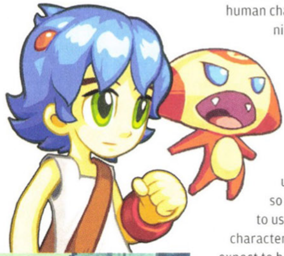
Once the game had begun to take shape, it was very apparent to Majesco and DreamRift that Monster Tale was something special. Both companies decided together to give it extra time to deliver the best experience, adding polish and fleshing out its features even further.

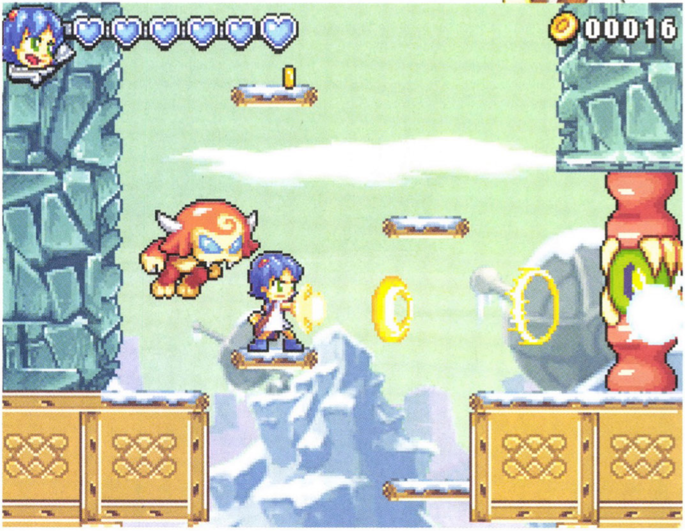
Where did the idea of a human/creature pairing as a core gameplay mechanic come from in the first place?

It was a combination of things that we wanted to see in a game. First, we knew we wanted to make a game that uses the DS hardware in a unique manner. We also thought that the concept of pet-raising was interesting, but we were unsatisfied with the extent to which typical pet-raising games integrate the growth of the pet into an overall game that matters. Our goal was to explore the idea of an evolving pet that can help the player within a different type of game mode, producing a combination that we haven't seen before.

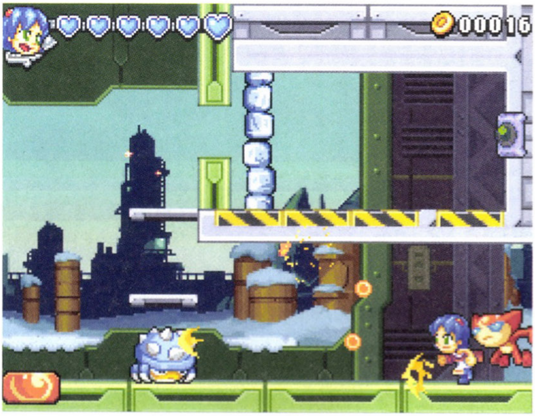
Why did you choose a girl as the main playable character?

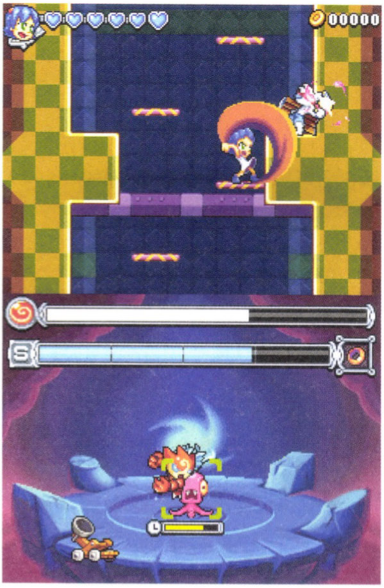
There are multiple reasons why we chose Ellie to be the main character. First, we thought that the pairing of the main human character with the pet monster, Chomp (who is male), would be more interesting with a female human character. There's definitely the strong theme of nurture here, which a female character can be very effective in expressing toward the pet monster. We also love the idea of underdogs and unlikely heroes. It's just so much more appealing to us to have the type of character that you wouldn't expect to be in this situation of have these amazing abilities actually doing it than the idea of another "generic-20-something-muscle-guy."

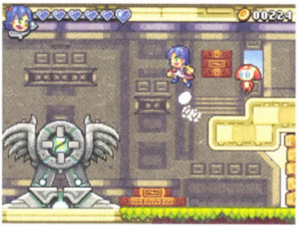




[Left] A girl and her monster blasting a mutant eyeball. How sweet!







[Left] These mysterious statues are hidden throughout the monster world. Track them down to unlock new abilities.

This choice was actually somewhat controversial with some publishers. Our experience was that many publishers are looking to avert the risk of a main character that hasn't been proven to capture large audiences. As a result, there was some concern from publishers that Ellie should change to a male or a more mature/sexy female.

Ellie seems pretty capable on her own. Why did you think it was important for her to have a companion helping her out on her adventure?
We definitely wanted her to have to depend on her companion in order to succeed on her adventure, but at the same time, we wanted her to feel formidable on her own. We felt that it was important to have the player often evaluating whether they should use the pet companion or not. In the game, she is capable of dealing with certain types of challenges by herself, but there are often things that she needs Chomp to deal with. This includes special devices and items that only Chomp can activate, enemies that dodge out of range of Ellie's moves, and even enemies/bosses that hang out on the bottom screen.

What's Ellie's backstory?
Ellie is a young girl who comes from our world, the human world. She's a fairly normal person in most respects, to whom something very unusual happens when she encounters a mysterious bracelet and is transported to the Monster World.

We're a few hours in and we've beaten the first two Kid Kings, and the game says we're about 3.3 percent complete. Is this accurate? The game must be huge!
In the early build you played, the completion percentage was probably not accurate. However, we don't expect the size of the game to be a disappointment.

How did you decide what items to include in the game for Chomp to interact with? For example, what made you include a soccer ball as a weapon?
Hmm...I would say we decided through a lot of brainstorming while having certain goals in mind. We knew we wanted a nice variety of conceptually different types of Pet Items. We also aimed to have Pet Items that would produce surprising results when used by the pet.

In the soccer ball's case, we definitely wanted to include at least some sports-type objects. With most of the game's areas containing many formidable enemy monsters, many of the things the pet can do for you involve offensive or defensive benefits, so it seemed natural for the soccer ball to be able to help in that manner.

Can you give some examples of how your path through the game could change depending on how Chomp evolves?
The player is able to get through the critical path of the game without unlocking optional forms of Chomp. However, if the player takes the time to evolve Chomp into certain forms, Chomp's abilities can allow them to access parts of the world that they would have difficulty accessing before. An example of this is the Tongue Bounce ability that one of the Chomp forms has. This ability causes Chomp to propel Ellie high up into the air, acting as a sort of companion double-jump. It can allow Ellie to reach ledges that her basic abilities wouldn't be able to reach.

Have you run into any unexpected challenges during the making of the game?
Although we expected it to be somewhat of a challenge, the decision to make this a map-exploration type of game entailed a couple of challenges that were not immediately apparent at the time. There's a ton of design planning that goes into determining the layout structure for this type of game, and it also requires different technology for properly hooking up areas to each other seamlessly. However, our technical director, Ryan Pijai, has done an awesome job of dealing with these hurdles readily and we've ended up with a great engine that goes above and beyond what we needed.

Is there anything else we should know about the game?
Some forms of Chomp can actually learn from enemies that he has encountered before, copying their moves [so they are] at the player's disposal. Be sure to try to give Chomp a wide variety of different Pet Items and activities in order to fully explore his potential to grow into different forms with different abilities.

Learn to use Google Earth to find out which castle the princess is in.

Mario
MARIO SEREIS

Join the X-Men so he can learn to use his mutant-squirrel powers to help humanity.

Tails
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG SEREIS

Stop fighting it and legally change his name to Kid Icarus.

Pit
KID ICARUS

Stop going to Sonic's barber.

Phoenix Wright
ACE ATTORNEY SERIES

RESOLUTION

We celebrate the dawn of 2011 with New Year's resolutions for

Stop downplaying his donkey side.

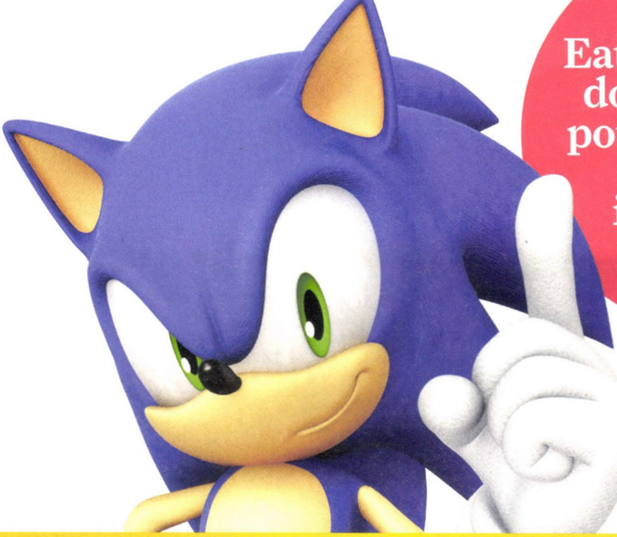
Donkey Kong
DONKEY KONG SEREIS

Hang on to weapons that he earns from old Robot Masters so he doesn't have to start over from scratch whenever Dr. Wily hatches another evil scheme.

Mega Man
MEGA MAN SEREIS

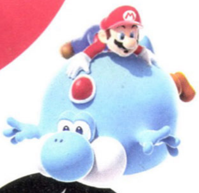
Read a few books on self-esteem.

Shy Guy
MARIO SEREIS



Eat enough chili dogs to get his pot belly back—just like in the good ol' days.

Sonic
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG SEREIS



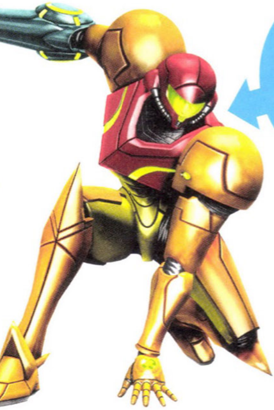
Go on a diet so he stops swelling up like a balloon.

Yoshi
SUPER MARIO GALAXY 2

REVOLUTION

your favorite (and not-so-favorite) video game characters!

A new calendar year is upon us, and you know what that means—New Year's resolutions! Almost everybody makes them (and some people even follow through with them), so why wouldn't your favorite video game characters do the same? We're not going to claim that we know what Mario, Samus, Mega Man, and Donkey Kong would resolve to do to better themselves—but we know what they *should* resolve (or, at least, what we'd like to see them do). Will Phoenix Wright change his spiky 'do? Will Princess Peach learn to fight back? Will Kin Corn Karn return to the ring?! Probably not—but you never know.

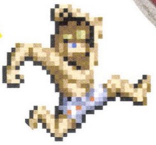


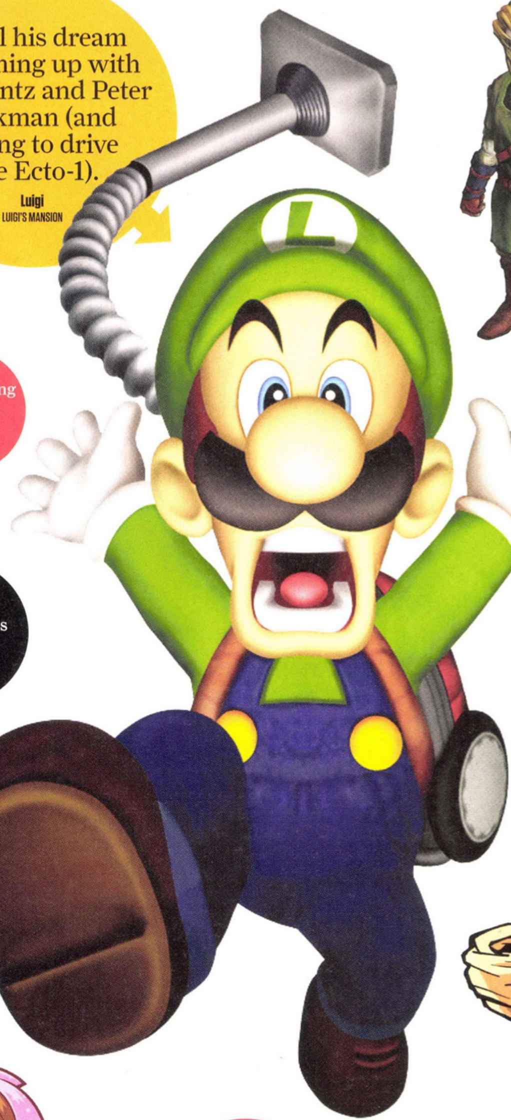
Destroy eight more planets and drive at least two more species into extinction in the name of galactic peace.

Samus Aran
METROID SERIES

Not get arrested for indecency the next time his armor "accidentally" pops off in public.

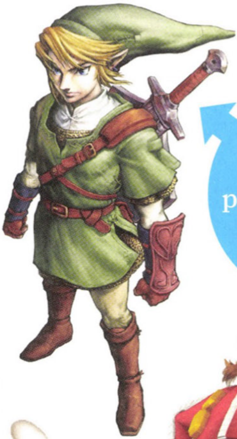
Arthur
GHOSTS'N GOBLINS SERIES





Fulfill his dream of teaming up with Ray Stantz and Peter Venkman (and getting to drive the Ecto-1).

Luigi
LUIGI'S MANSION

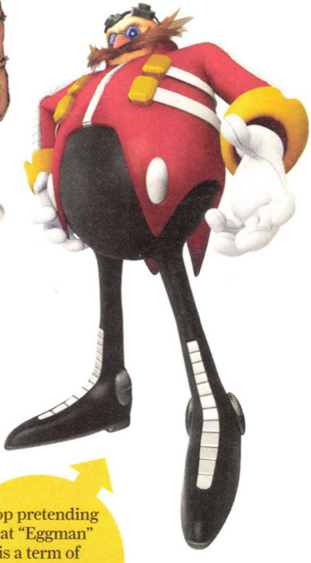


Take some classes on public speaking.

Link
THE LEGEND OF ZELDA SERIES

Stop shaving his chest.

Toad
MARIO SERIES



Stop pretending that "Eggman" is a term of endearment.

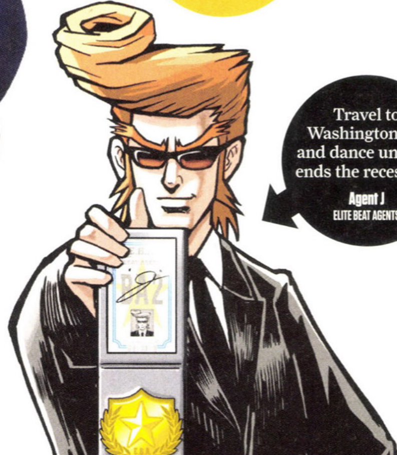
Dr. Robotnik
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG SERIES

Cut eyeholes in mask.

Starman
PRO WRESTLING

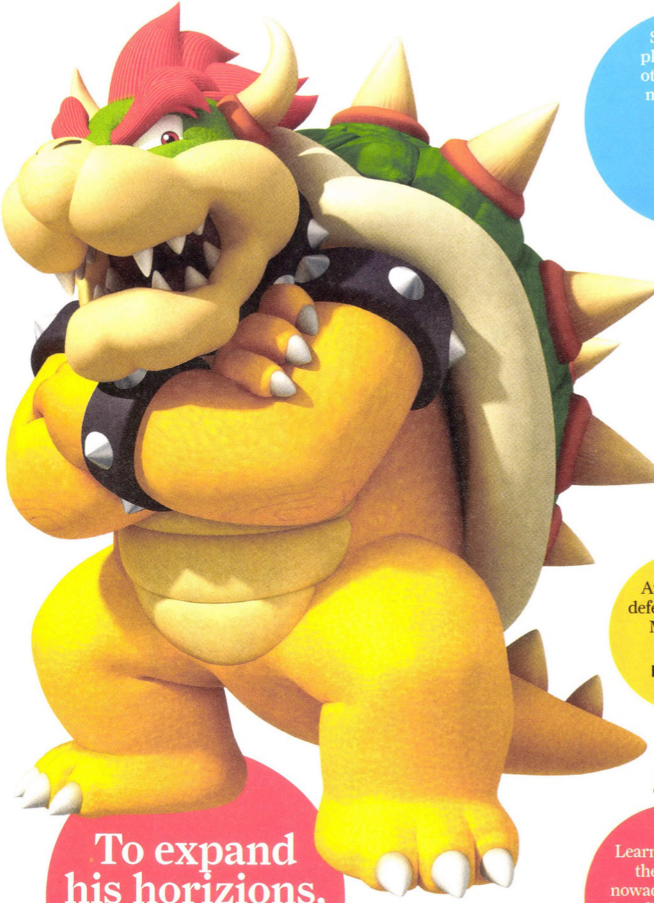
Publically apologize for the time she accidentally sautéed and grilled Eggplant Wizard.

Mama
COOKING MAMA SERIES



Travel to Washington DC and dance until he ends the recession.

Agent J
ELITE BEAT AGENTS



To expand his horizions, kidnapping-wise.

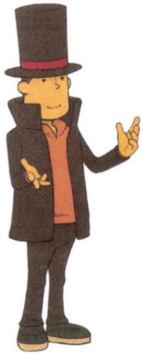
Bowser
MARIO SERIES

Stop taking pleasure from other people's misfortunes.

DOG
DUCK HUNT

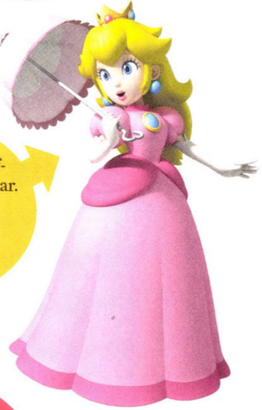
Grow a beard and become the world's top Abraham Lincoln impersonator.

Professor Layton
PROFESSOR LAYTON SERIES



Attend a self-defense seminar. Maybe two or three.

Princess Peach
MARIO SERIES



Learn what slang the kids use nowadays to mean "good" and become that kind of ninja.

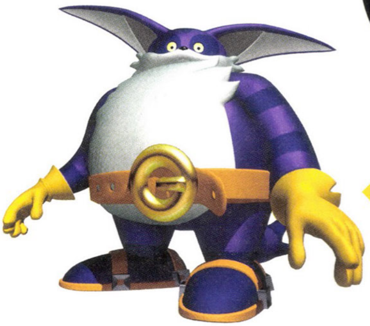
Kid Niki
KID NIKI: RADICAL NINJA

Listen to what other people have to say for a change.

Navi
THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME

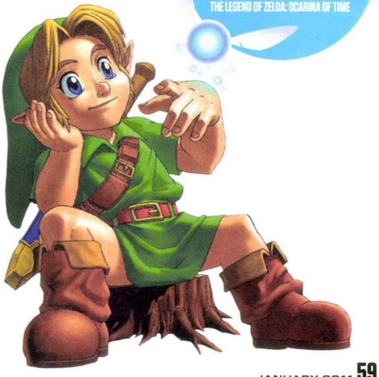
Change his nickname from "a living karate tool" to something less insluting.

Kin Corn Karn
PRO WRESTLING



Drop dead.

Big the Cat
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG SERIES

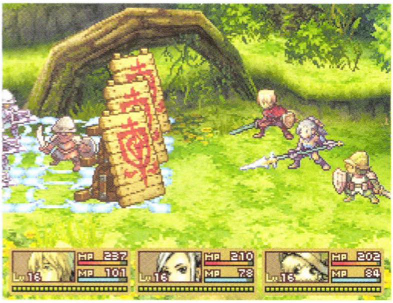


HISTORY IN THE REMAKING

Alternate dimensions serve as the ports of call in Atlus's time-traveling DS adventure, Radiant Historia.

Ever create a save file before a major decision point in a video game, select one option, and then immediately reload to see what would have happened if you had chosen differently? Radiant Historia doesn't just permit this sort of time-travel trickery; it *demands* it. As your hero learns early in the game, his homeland of Vainqueur is so phenomenally screwed that in all of its possible futures, there is, as one character puts it, only a single "razor-thin path of light" that leads to anything other than complete, life-ending tragedy.

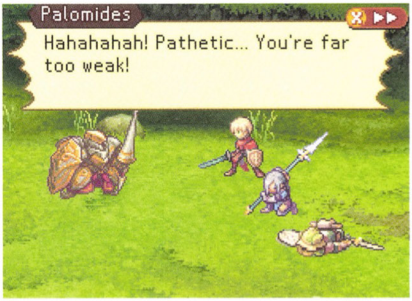
Finding that razor-thin path will mean making the correct decision at *every* possible juncture. Fortunately, you won't have to do anything so crude as reaching for the reset button; your hero is blessed with a magical tome known as the White Chronicle, which allows him to immediately return to any pivotal moment in history in which he played a part. The book keeps him outside of the time streams he visits, so he'll bring back whatever knowledge, items, and experience he's acquired. Unfortunately, he'll also bring back



BY **CASEY LOE**

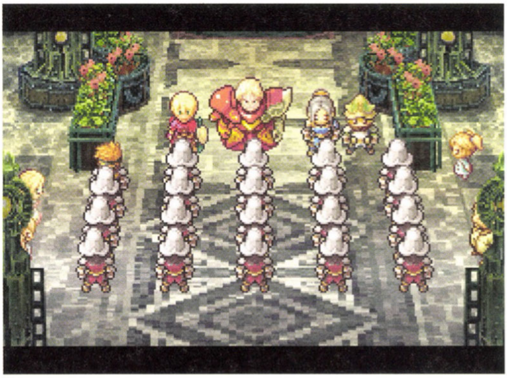
PUBLISHER: **ATLUS** DEVELOPER: **ATLUS** RELEASE: **FEBRUARY 2011**

DS

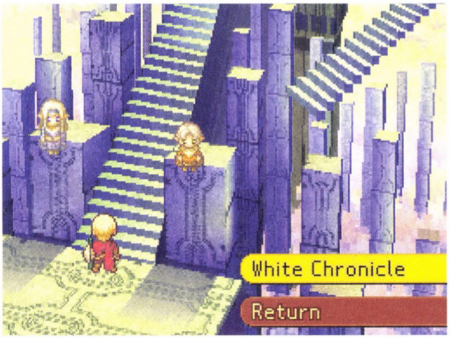


Palomides

Hahahahah! Pathetic... You're far too weak!



[Right] Rosch's triple-wide sprite makes him the envy of the Alistel army.



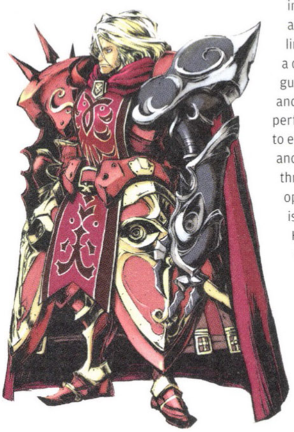
Lazvil Hills
Cave
1097 G
CAMP

whatever wounds he's suffered. And if he dies, the book can't help him; you can change the flow of history in Vainqueur, but your personal history remains a one-way street.

TWISTING HISTORY

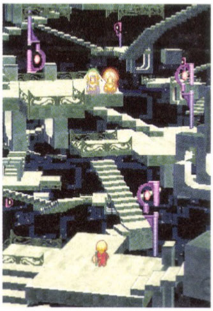
Time travel has long been a popular theme in video games (most notably in The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask and Square Enix's Chrono series), but Radiant Historia makes time travel the centerpiece of its structure in a way that's never been done before. You can freely travel not only back and forth in time, but between the multiple alternate timelines that are created whenever you make a different choice at a pivotal point in history. The White Chronicle keeps track of all this insanity, organizing each of the time streams into an easy-to-understand flow chart from which you can select key junctures for your space-time warping convenience. Timelines that end badly don't disappear, so you always have the option to return and do things differently, potentially creating still more alternate histories.

Still with me? Perhaps an example will help. At one point in the game, your party attempts to infiltrate enemy lines by posing as part of a circus troupe. When a guard singles out your hero and demands an impromptu performance, you can choose to either abandon the mission and flee, or fight your way through the checkpoint. Both options end badly, which is pretty typical; Radiant Historia has more bad endings than the Stephen King section at Barnes & Noble (*rimshot!*). When you're out of options, it's back to Historia, a world of doors and stairways that exists in the void between dimensions. From here you can start exploring the paths you chose not to travel, like when you declined a transfer to a special military brigade. At some point in that timeline, you'll meet a fellow soldier who can teach you the acrobatic art of sword dancing. With that skill in your repertoire, you can return to the timeline that ended at that enemy checkpoint, and bust out a sword-dancing performance to convince the guards that you're a circus freak after all. Just like that, a dead-end timeline is again open for exploration.



A STITCH IN TIME... AIN'T GONNA CUT IT

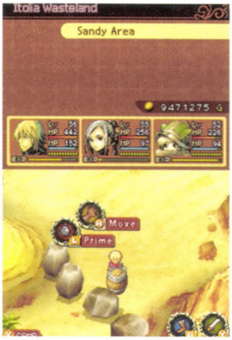
The troubles facing the land of Vainqueur are so pervasive that even the power to rewrite history doesn't provide an easy solution. The entire continent is in the slow grips of desertification, a process that causes verdant land to slowly degrade into lifeless desert. (Perhaps this oddly popular malady spread into Vainqueur from a DS that had been recently used to play Sands of Destruction?) Even total environmental collapse is a distant concern for the people Vainqueur, who are locked in a bloody cycle of warfare as they fight over what little arable land remains. The game begins in the theocratic nation of Alistel, where hero Stocke serves in the Special Intelligence branch of the military. Alistel is on the losing end of a long-fought war with the neighboring kingdom of Granorg,



[Above] Historia's nexus of time streams also provides a rippin' workout for Stocke's calves.

Raynie

I'm Raynie. Good to meet you.

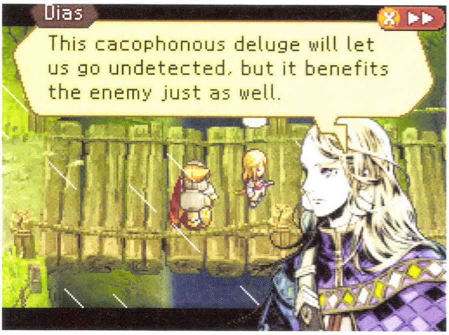


ruled by a heartless and megalomaniacal queen. That sounds pretty bad, but there's an ominous cloud over Alistel as well, as the nation is ostensibly being led by the decrees of a prophet who no one has seen in person for years. The entire continent is enmeshed in so much Machiavellian plotting that it isn't even clear who the villains are, and an ally today can quickly become an adversary tomorrow.

It gets worse. There's some dude out there with the mirror-image version of your White Chronicle—the Black Chronicle—and he's using it to keep Vainqueur firmly sandwiched between its rock and a hard place. As any sci-fi fan knows, evil time travelers tend to be a lot more effective than their good counterparts, because all they need to do is remove the few pivotal players in history. To compete, Stocke will have to bend the rules of time travel until they snap completely, stitching events from one time stream into another. For example, when an informant with important information turns up dead, Stocke will have to find him in another time stream and fight off his attackers. It doesn't make a lot of time-travel sense, but this change of history will somehow reverberate into alternate time streams, changing history there as well.

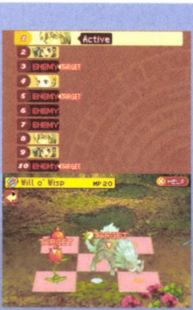
TIME-TESTED QUESTING

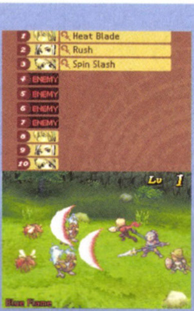
With so much complexity tied up in its time-hopping scenario, it's hard to complain about the other aspects of Radiant Historia sticking so close to well-established RPG formulas. Characters gain levels, heal at inns, and buy new gear at weapon shops. You can pick up



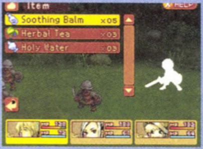
Dias

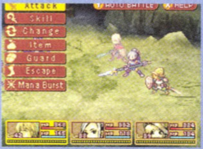
This cacophonous deluge will let us go undetected, but it benefits the enemy just as well.





COMBAT: LIFE ON THE GRID





While it may look conventional, a few simple twists give Radiant Historia's battle system a surprisingly unique feel. When a battle begins, your three-man party lines up on one side of the screen in a gentlemanly, Final Fantasy-esque fashion. Your foes, however, end up scattered across a 3x3 grid. The enemy forces can use their additional space to form into offensive and defensive formations, but mostly the grid is just there so you can mess with them. By using special attacks that knock foes in specific directions, you can push one enemy into another so they briefly occupy the same position. Follow-up spells and attacks from other party members will then be able to hit every enemy that shares the same square.

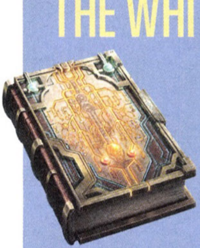
To exploit this mechanic, you'll need to take advantage of the turn-order listing on the top screen. Swinging your sword at an enemy icon before combat begins will let you start with a bunch of consecutive turns, but in most cases your hero turns will be scattered. Whenever one does roll around, you have the option to swap that character's turn order with any other character's upcoming turn, including your enemies'. Letting the enemy get the jump on your party doesn't sound like a great strategy, but by manipulating the turn order so that your team has a long, consecutive run of turns, you can set up lengthy combos. It isn't always the best strategy, but it's a blast to set up one supercombo in which your first turn hits a foe into an occupied square to the left, the second turn knocks those two into a third enemy soldier in the back, and the rest are used to pummel the tangled pile of foes with progressively stronger combo attacks.

side quests by talking to NPCs, and complete them in whatever time stream you like. Battles are encounter-based (they trigger when you run into the icons of enemies on the battlefield), and unfold in a strategic turn-by-turn fashion (but with plenty of interesting twists—see the sidebar "Combat: Life on the Grid"). Stocke can use his sword to knock foes away on the battlefield, or pummel them repeatedly to knock them out, giving his side the advantage when the battle begins.

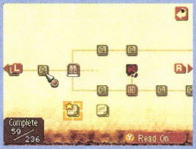
As he progresses through the various timelines, Stocke will assemble a party of like-minded warriors to fight by his side. Party members lack the ability to travel through time (and most have no idea that their boss has access to such powers), but somehow still manage to keep their EXP, levels, and equipment from scenario to scenario. Don't ask why—just remind yourself how much it would suck if they didn't.

Although the game seems mostly modeled after orthodox RPG series like Dragon Quest and Final Fantasy, it also borrows a few tricks from the action-RPG playbook. Stocke can use certain items and abilities while exploring field areas, such as a boost of strength that allows him to push through blockades, an extrasensory perception that allows him to spot hidden items, and a cloak of silence that allows him to conceal himself from wandering foes. The game's time-travel scenario necessarily features a lot of backtracking, as Stocke is forced to relive chunks of his past, but his ever-growing repertoire of abilities allows him to discover new items, routes, and areas on return trips to familiar locales. Of course, the Legend of Zelda formula of using new items in old areas has been around forever, but the chronological structure of Radiant Historia adds a pervasive twist: when you gain a new ability, like the power to "prime" powder kegs into rock-shattering explosives, you don't find yourself trying to remember *where* it would have been useful, so much as *when*. Vainqueur may have a typical world map full of forests, deserts, and mines, but the locations feel almost irrelevant; this time you're exploring timelines and alternate dimensions, not mere geography.

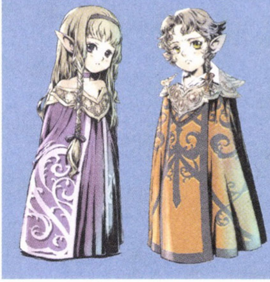
FLIPPING THROUGH THE WHITE CHRONICLE

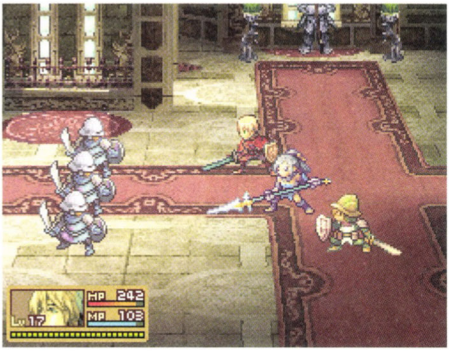


Radiant Historia would be an incomprehensible mess if it weren't for the White Chronicle, an initially blank tome that fills its pages with an easy-to-read map of the alternate timelines you've created. The branching timelines are composed of hundreds of "nodes" that summarize each in-game event. Purple nodes mark plot points with only one possible outcome, whereas red notes signify the dead ends in history at which all hope of saving the world is lost. The most important nodes are the blue ones, which mark pivotal decisions that Stocke can revisit.



Your guides to space-time are Teo and Lippti, a peculiar pair of childlike beings who have spent untold eternities trying to get the White Chronicle into the hands of someone who can compose the single chain of events that can guide history to its rightful end. They appear whenever it's necessary to explain the intricacies of time travel, guide Stocke out of dead ends, or warn him of how history is being warped by the Black Chronicle. But Stocke doesn't need to wait for an invitation to visit Teo and Lippti in Historia, the strange dimension that exists outside of linear time. Whenever you feel you've hit a dead end or you simply tire of your current path, you can warp to Historia from any save point and travel from there to any blue node in your book. As complicated as it sounds, the White Chronicle makes it easy and intuitive to juggle scores of alternate histories.





[Above] Crystals, an ethereal glow, and a magical tree? The mighty White Chronicle can emit the entire JRPG trifecta of power!

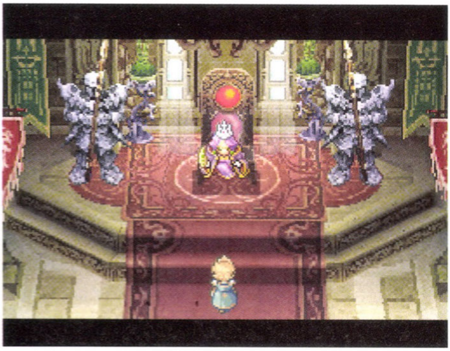
The sand engulfed everything...

DIMENSIONS IN SOUND

ATLUS
www.atlus.com
disc
RADIANT HISTORIA

Arguably the game industry's most famous female composer, Yoko Shimomura has created the soundtracks to more than 35 games, including all of the entries in the Kingdom Hearts and Mario & Luigi series, as well as the upcoming Final Fantasy Versus XIII. But she's also a closet Shin Megami Tensei fan who boasts of having played through the entirety of the original SMT three times just to see all the endings. When she got an email asking if she'd be interested in contributing to a new Atlus franchise, she jumped at the chance.

Shimomura ended up composing 25 tracks for Radiant Historia, and the music is some of her finest work yet. The soundtrack has a more adult feel than many of her more famous, whimsical works, and is thick with classic European instruments like violins and organs. As a special incentive for early buyers, Atlus will be packing each copy of the game's first shipment with an exclusive CD featuring studio-recorded piano arrangements of some of Shimomura's favorite tracks.



[Above] In the enemy kingdom of Granorg, princess Eruca tries to figure out why she appears so prominently in the cover art. Plot twist incoming?

Alistel
Granorg
Cygnus
Alistel
CAMP
START SAVE

Lazvil Hills
Highway V
1208 G
HP 176
MP 76
HP 147
MP 65
HP 95
MP 67
EXP
CAMP

TIDYING UP THE TIME STREAM

As its not-quite-an-anagram title suggests, Radiant Historia had its roots in the Square Enix-published PS2 game Radiata Stories. Led by designer Satoshi Takayashiki, several members of the Radiata Stories team broke off to create a playable demo and design document for Radiant Historia, which they brought to Atlus in 2007. Atlus has never been in the business of acquiring outside ideas; when the company does work with outside developers, its own staff typically comes up with the idea and hires contractors to execute it. But Atlus director Mitsuru Hirata was intrigued by the concept of Radiant Historia, which felt like something that would never have come from the company's own internal design teams.

Hirata signed on as director, a decision that brought him many long meetings in Atlus's conference rooms, working out the game's twisted chronology on the company's whiteboards. A few changes were made: the battle system was sped up, the scenario was streamlined, and, most significantly, the hero was changed from a sentient sword to a person after Hirata insisted that an actual human being would be easier for players to connect with and offer more possibilities for romantic subplots. Fortunately, the team avoided the usual mopey-teen archetypes and built Stocke as a reserved, self-assured, and very adult spy. Stocke keeps his emotions in check, but comes to respect and perhaps even sort of like his two subordinates, a pair of young mercenaries who were originally assigned to serve as expendable pawns.

The English localization of Radiant Historia was underway long before the game's Japanese release, so either Atlus USA saw a bright future for Radiant Historia at an early stage of development, or they were forced to crack open the company's own White Chronicle after ignoring the title caused some unspeakable tragedy. Whatever the reason, let's just be glad we live in a timeline in which Radiant Historia will be seeing a prompt North American release on February 22.

NINTENDO POWER

AWARDS 2010 NOMINATIONS

What were your favorite games of 2010? Peruse this year's nominees for the prestigious Nintendo Power Awards, then go to www.nintendopower.com/npawards and let your voice be heard!

Compared to those in previous years, the debate over the 2010 nominees for the Nintendo Power Awards was surprisingly civil. Only one editor lost a tooth, and nobody got stabbed with a pen this time! That doesn't make these contenders any less worthy of the accolades. On the contrary, this is one of the strongest lineups—especially for the Wii console—we've ever seen. Now the real battle begins—choosing the winners. You can weigh in by voting for your favorites at www.nintendopower.com/npawards, including the Overall Game of the Year. Your picks will run alongside the editors' selections in the March issue. Happy voting!

Wii Games **DS Games**

F

C

B

Game of the Year Wii

After claiming easy wins in 2007 and 2009, Mario's got to be feeling good about his odds of scoring a threepeat with Super Mario Galaxy 2. But instead of facing under-the-radar cult hits like Klonoa and Little King's Story, this year Mario will have to overcome strong competition from fellow Nintendo icons Kirby, Samus, and Donkey Kong, as well as the first serious challenge from Sonic in more than a decade. The only contender keeping this category from being a Super Smash Bros. Brawl reunion is long shot NBA Jam; while all the platforming icons are fighting among themselves, could its cast of sports all-stars sneak by to steal the game?

A **Donkey Kong Country Returns**

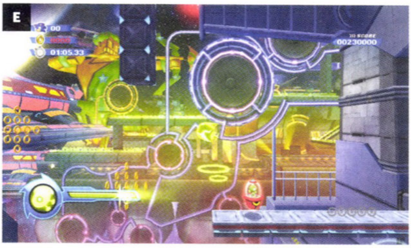
B **Kirby's Epic Yarn**

C **Metroid: Other M**

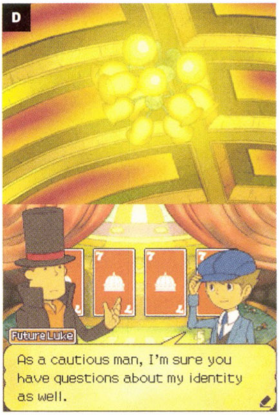
D **NBA Jam**

E **Sonic Colors**

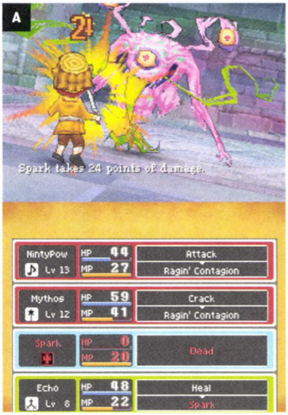
F **Super Mario Galaxy 2**


E

A

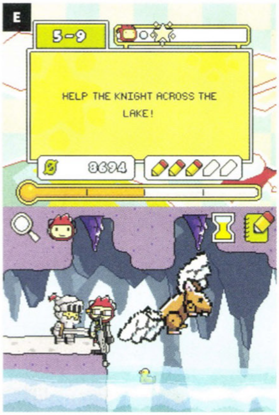


As a cautious man, I'm sure you have questions about my identity as well.



Spark takes 24 points of damage.

NintyPow Lv 13 HP 44 MP 27 Attack Ragin' Contagion
Mythos Lv 12 HP 59 MP 41 Crack Ragin' Contagion
Spark HP 0 MP 20 Dead
Echo Lv 8 HP 48 MP 22 Heal Spark



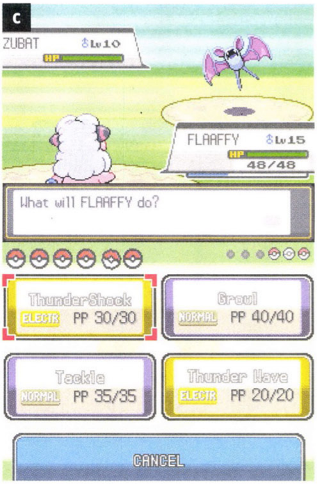
HELP THE KNIGHT ACROSS THE LAKE!

- **A** Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies
- **B** Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors
- **C** Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions
- **D** Professor Layton and the Unwound Future
- **E** Super Scribblenauts
- **F** WarioWare D.I.Y.

Game of the Year

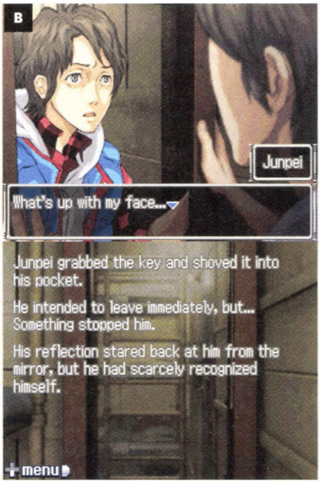
Nintendo DS

This year's contenders are a cerebral bunch, rewarding creativity and puzzle-solving skills in place of fast-twitch reflexes. The RPG nominees include new releases from Pokémon and Dragon Quest, two of gaming's most venerable franchises. In the adventure-puzzle genre, dark horse Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors offers a spirited challenge to the latest mystery from Professor Layton. Super Scribblenauts and WarioWare D.I.Y. round out the list with their remarkable ability to mine mechanics from the imaginations of their players.



What will FLAAFFY do?

ThunderShock ELECTR PP 30/30
Growl NORMAL PP 40/40
Tackle NORMAL PP 35/35
Thunder Wave ELECTR PP 20/20
CANCEL

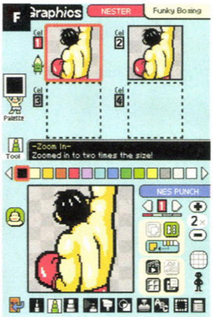


What's up with my face...

Junpei grabbed the key and shoved it into his pocket.

He intended to leave immediately, but... Something stopped him.

His reflection stared back at him from the mirror, but he had scarcely recognized himself.

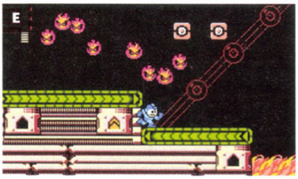


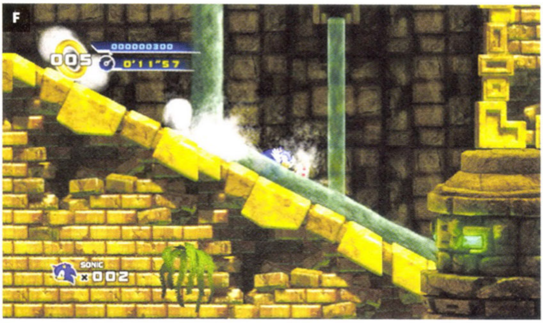
-Zoom In-
Zoomed in to two times the size!

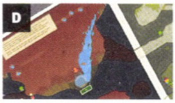
Game of the Year WiiWare

WiiWare games might cost less and tend to be shorter than their full-fledged retail counterparts, but when it comes to fun, they can be just as good as packaged games—and in many cases, even better. Without having to worry about fighting for shelf space or keeping up with sales trends, WiiWare creators can focus on the pure gaming experience. That has given rise to this year's excellent batch of contenders, which includes beloved series as well as Nintendo-platform newcomers.

- **A** **And Yet It Moves**
- **B** **Blaster Master Overdrive**
- **C** **Cave Story**
- **D** **Fluidity**
- **E** **Mega Man 10**
- **F** **Sonic the Hedgehog 4: Episode 1**



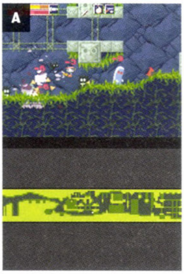

F
005
000000300
0'11"57
SONIC
x002



Game of the Year DSiWare

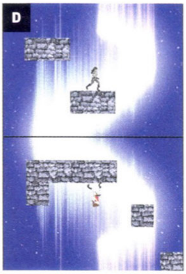
After an understated showing in 2009, DSiWare really came into its own in 2010 with a variety of quality titles. Whether you prefer the brain-bending platforming of Divergent Shift and Chronos Twins, the adventuring of Cave Story and Shantae: Risky's Revenge, the retro-inspired shooting action of Dark Void Zero, or the laugh-out-loud zaniness of Photo Dojo, you had some great reasons to log onto the Nintendo DSi Shop this past year.

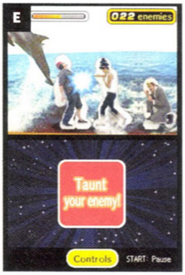
- **A** **Cave Story**
- **B** **Chronos Twins**
- **C** **Dark Void Zero**
- **D** **Divergent Shift**
- **E** **Photo Dojo**
- **F** **Shantae: Risky's Revenge**



B
PRESENT
ENERGY
DANGER
DANGER
LIFE
PAST
ENERGY

C
016/100
1/5
008849
037
02



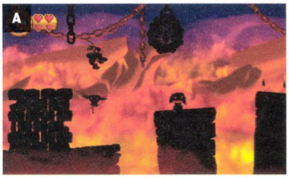

E
022 enemies
Taunt your enemy!
Controls
START: Pause

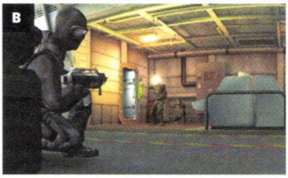
F
Inventory:
Use Items:
Key Items:

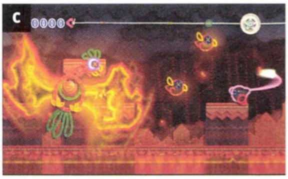
Best Wii Graphics

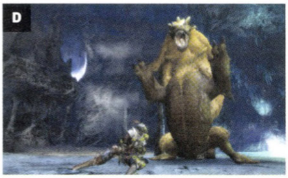
Super Mario Galaxy won this category in a walk in 2007, and its sequel seems like the odds-on favorite in 2010. But Mario will be facing a much steeper level of competition now that the experienced Wii developers behind Donkey Kong Country Returns, Monster Hunter Tri, Sonic Colors, and GoldenEye 007 have mastered the art of squeezing vivid polygonal worlds out of the console's graphics chips. Kirby's Epic Yarn is a wildcard to watch: its fabric-themed universe provided some of the year's most imaginative and memorable visuals.

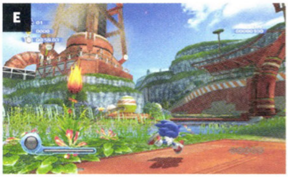
- **A** **Donkey Kong Country Returns**
- **B** **GoldenEye 007**
- **C** **Kirby's Epic Yarn**
- **D** **Monster Hunter Tri**
- **E** **Sonic Colors**
- **F** **Super Mario Galaxy 2**

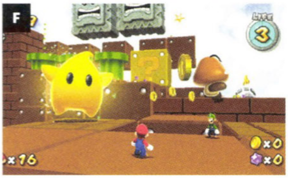

A

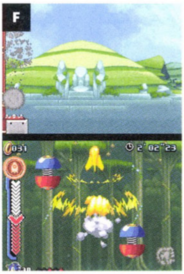

B

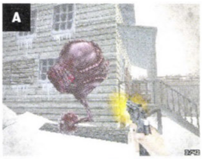

C

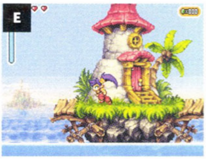

D

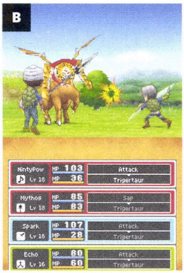

E


F


F

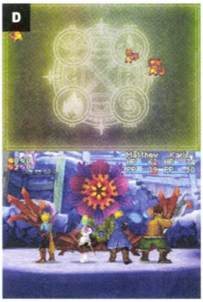

A

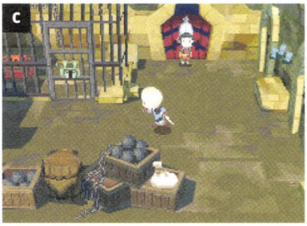

E


B

Best Nintendo DS Graphics

Three RPGs made this list, forcing role-players to choose between the richly detailed Dragon Quest IX, the strikingly stylized Final Fantasy: The 4 Heroes of Light, and the charming Golden Sun: Dark Dawn. Dot-pixel graphics made a strong comeback with the crisp and colorful Sonic Colors and Shantae: Risky's Revenge, while impressive technical achievement earned Dementium II a top slot.


D


C

- **A** **Dementium II**
- **B** **Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies**
- **C** **Final Fantasy: The 4 Heroes of Light**
- **D** **Golden Sun: Dark Dawn**
- **E** **Shantae: Risky's Revenge**
- **F** **Sonic Colors**

Best Original Score

The sequel to 2007 winner Super Mario Galaxy faces stiff challenges from Sonic and Donkey Kong, two storied franchises at the top of their musical game. But perhaps we'll see an upset born from the sweeping score of Epic Mickey, the masterful compositions of Arc Rise Fantasia, or the simple, memorable tunes of lone DS entrant FF: T4HoL.

- **A** Arc Rise Fantasia
- **B** Donkey Kong Country Returns
- **C** Epic Mickey
- **D** Final Fantasy: The 4 Heroes of Light
- **E** Sonic Colors
- **F** Super Mario Galaxy 2

Best Adventure Game

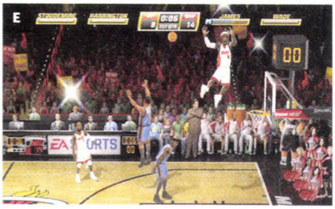
This brutally competitive category encompasses a wide variety of games, including story-driven puzzler Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors; classic-style side-scrollers Cave Story and Shantae: Risky's Revenge; and the cinematic Metroid: Other M. These disparate nominees are united by their emphasis on exploration and strategically rich gameplay.

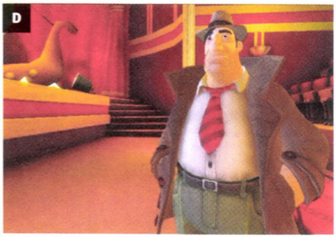
- **A** Cave Story
- **B** Epic Mickey
- **C** Metroid: Other M
- **D** Monster Hunter Tri
- **E** Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors
- **F** Shantae: Risky's Revenge

Best Sound/Voice Acting

Everyone places a lot of focus on the visual aspect of video games (understandable given the name of the medium), but sometimes the audio can prove just as impactful—be it through high-quality voice acting, an ambient soundscape, or speaker-rattling explosions. Just give a listen to the nominees for Best Sound/Voice Acting. Guilty Party's snappy dialogue made us laugh, Hollywood-quality sound effects got our blood pumping in Call of Duty: Black Ops, and NBA Jam made us stand up and cheer, courtesy of Tim "Boom Shaka-laka" Kitzrow.

- **A** Call of Duty: Black Ops
- **B** Epic Mickey
- **C** GoldenEye 007
- **D** Guilty Party
- **E** NBA Jam
- **F** Professor Layton and the Unwound Future





Best Shooter

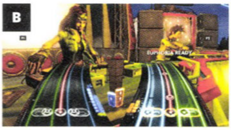
First-person shooters dominate this category—and with good reason: the Cold War-era-set Call of Duty Black: Ops, the reimagined GoldenEye 007, and the greatly-improved-over-its-predecessor Red Steel 2 all proved to be excellent first-person experiences. But charming side-scroller Bit. Trip Fate for WiiWare proved that first person isn't the only perspective from which shooters can be enjoyed.

A **Bit.Trip Fate**
B **Call of Duty: Black Ops**
C **GoldenEye 007**
D **Red Steel 2**

Best Music/Rhythm Game

The past year was all about taking what we already knew about rhythm games and adding a twist. On the Wii front, DJ Hero 2 added a microphone and more freestyling to the mix, Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock gave us a more focused story and arsenal of superpowers, and Rock Band 3 taught us the basics of playing a real-life guitar, keyboard, or drums. Meanwhile, DS owners were treated to the Rhythm Heaven-esque Beat City and the Elite Beat Agents-like Michael Jackson: The Experience.

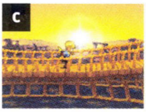
A **Beat City**
B **DJ Hero 2**
C **Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock**
D **Michael Jackson: The Experience**
E **Rock Band 3**



Best Role-Playing/ Strategy Game

It's been a banner year for RPGs on the DS. Dragon Quest returned to the platform with a game-changing ninth installment, Golden Sun came back swinging after a seven-year absence, and Pokémon offered up remakes of its fan-favorite Gold and Silver editions. In addition to the heavy hitters, 2010 saw the memorable debut of Infinite Space, the finest Etrian Odyssey yet, and the long-awaited return of the mainline Shin Megami Tensei series.

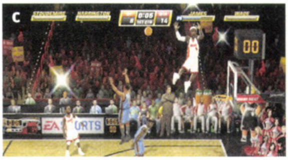
A **Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies**
B **Etrian Odyssey III: The Drowned City**
C **Golden Sun: Dark Dawn**
D **Infinite Space**
E **Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions**
F **Shin Megami Tensei: Strange Journey**

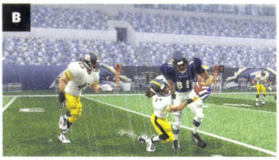


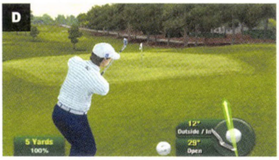
Best Sports Game

Oftentimes sports games get short shrift on Wii, but that certainly wasn't the case with these four titles (all published by EA Sports, interestingly enough). This year's version of Madden was the best on the console to date, thanks in large part to its revamped Franchise mode. Fans of the other type of football got a fun, arcade-style take on their sport with FIFA Soccer 11, while Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11 offered an unprecedented level of authenticity by taking full advantage of the Wii MotionPlus accessory. And NBA Jam made its triumphant return with a new installment that not only stays true to the original arcade hit, but surpasses it in every way.

- **A** **FIFA Soccer 11**
- **B** **Madden NFL 11**
- **C** **NBA Jam**
- **D** **Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11**





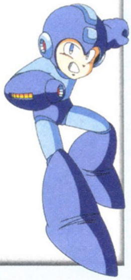


Best Action Game

Between the flashy tag-team combat of Tatsunoko vs. Capcom, the gritty one-on-one duels of No More Heroes 2, and the over-the-top bullet-hell intensity of Sin and Punishment: Star Successor, our Wii remotes and Classic Controllers absorbed plenty of hand sweat in 2010. Players who prefer a more traditional style of action game had plenty of compelling options as well, with the NES-flavored Mega Man 10 and Dark Void Zero available on WiiWare and DSiWare, respectively, and versions of the mind-bending, dual-world blaster Chronos Twins available for download on both services.

- **A** **Chronos Twins**
- **B** **Dark Void Zero**
- **C** **Mega Man 10**
- **D** **No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle**
- **E** **Sin and Punishment: Star Successor**
- **F** **Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars**

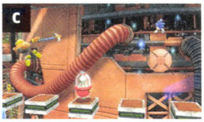
E
BOSS
SCORE
226,089
MULTIPLIER
x0.7
ISA
Destroyed
78



Best Platformer

In the star-studded platformer category, Mario seeks to defend his 2009 crown from old nemesis Donkey Kong, a resurgent Sonic the Hedgehog, and 2008 title-holder Kirby. An equally interesting drama is unfolding within the split psyche of Sonic himself: will fans align behind his ground-breaking turn in Sonic Colors or his old-school revival in Sonic 4?

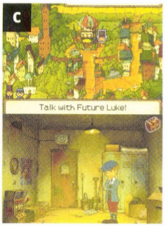
- **A** **Donkey Kong Country Returns**
- **B** **Kirby's Epic Yarn**
- **C** **Sonic Colors**
- **D** **Sonic the Hedgehog 4: Episode 1**
- **E** **Super Mario Galaxy 2**



B

Level 2-A
04:09

C



Best Puzzle Game

If you want to give your brain a workout, you needn't look any further than these six contenders. Though each game delivers mind-melting fun in a different way—some are new iterations of tried-and-true classics, some are wrapped up in platforming or adventure packaging, and some are thoroughly original—they all exemplify the puzzle-game mantra of easy to learn, hard to master, and nearly impossible to put down.

- **A** **Bejeweled Twist**
- **B** **Picross 3D**
- **C** **Professor Layton and the Unwound Future**
- **D** **Super Scribblenauts**
- **E** **Tetris Party Deluxe**
- **F** **ThruSpace**

Best Multiplayer

The nominees in the Best Multiplayer category prove that everything is more fun with friends, whether it's joining forces to slay a 50-foot sea serpent in Monster Hunter Tri or hurling lethal headwear at each other in GoldenEye 007. Rock Band 3 and DJ Hero 2 let you make sweet music together, while NBA Jam and Tatsunoko vs. Capcom are sure to spark armchair rivalries. Just remember to shake hands at the end of any multiplayer session—unless you lose, in which case you're totally justified in throwing your real hat at the winner.

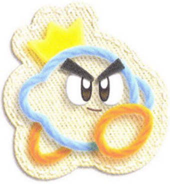
- **A** **DJ Hero 2**
- **B** **GoldenEye 007**
- **C** **Monster Hunter Tri**
- **D** **NBA Jam**
- **E** **Rock Band 3**
- **F** **Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars**

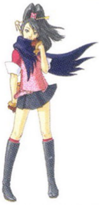
C

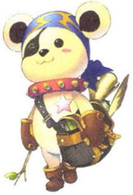
Best New Character

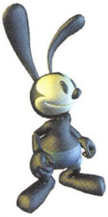
With the exception of Quote, all of these new faces played a supporting role in their respective titles, but they made a lasting impression nonetheless. It's an eclectic group, to be sure, ranging from a sexy space pirate to a killer teddy bear. Some may question Oswald's inclusion on this list when he's been around since before the Great Depression. Our response: this is the first time he's appeared in a video game and he's awesome. If you don't like it, you can file a complaint with the Nintendo Power Board of Elections.

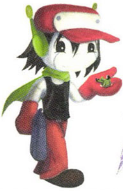
- **A** **Prince Fluff—Kirby's Epic Yarn**
- **B** **Kay—Ace Attorney Investigations: Miles Edgeworth**
- **C** **Taupy—Sands of Destruction**
- **D** **Oswald—Epic Mickey**
- **E** **Quote—Cave Story**
- **F** **Nia Lochlain—Infinite Space**

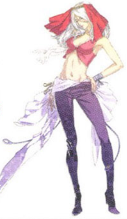












Best Story/Writing

We used to struggle to fill out this category, but this year saw more worthy entrants than we had space to include. Running the emotional gamut from the irreverent wit of No More Heroes 2 to the poignant tragedy of Fragile Dreams and the thriller-like intensity of Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors, 2010 saw writing achievements in a wide variety of styles. The ever-consistent Professor Layton and Ace Attorney series turned in their usual strong scripts, while Epic Mickey surprised us with an affecting story that took Disney's iconic mascot in a bold new direction.

A **Ace Attorney Investigations: Miles Edgeworth**
B **Epic Mickey**
C **Fragile Dreams: Farewell Ruins of the Moon**
D **Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors**
E **No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle**
F **Professor Layton and the Unwound Future**

Best New Idea

Though tried-and-true gameplay was the dominant theme of 2010 (just check out the category below), there was still plenty of innovation to be found, as highlighted by our nominees for Best New Idea. And Yet It Moves, Epic Mickey, and Divergent Shift each revolved around a compelling new play mechanic, while Dragon Quest IX extended its old-school journey with novel implementation of Tag Mode and weekly downloadable quests. Photo Dojo and WarioWare D.I.Y. gave players the opportunity to unleash their own creativity (for better or for worse).

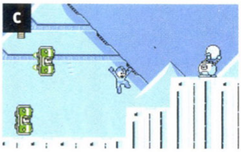
A **And Yet It Moves—Rotate the world at any time and any place**
B **Divergent Shift—Control two mirrored characters simultaneously in a platformer**
C **Dragon Quest IX—Downloadable quests and Tag Mode treasure maps**
D **Epic Mickey—Use paint and thinner to manipulate your surroundings**
E **Photo Dojo—Turn photographs into a fighting game**
F **WarioWare D.I.Y.—Create and share your own microgames**

F
Feel the
POWER
Go ninja go!

Best Retro Revival

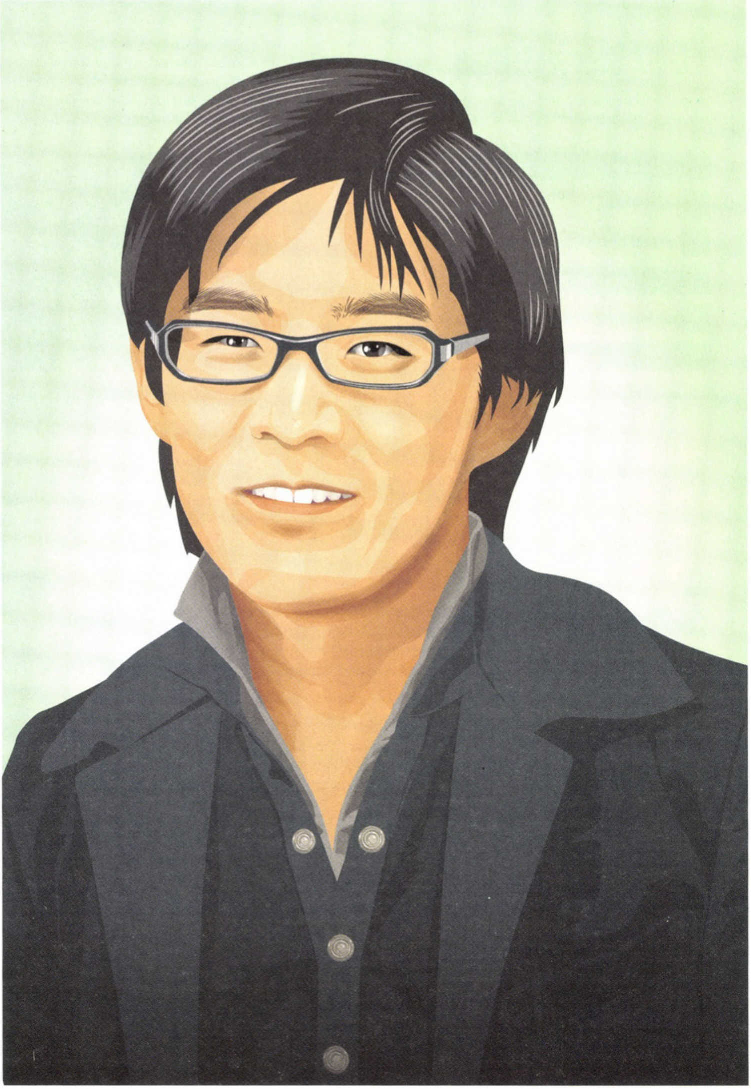
If you've been playing video games for a while, this year was like one big reunion. We got the first new Donkey Kong Country and numbered Sonic the Hedgehog title in more than a decade, NBA Jam finally got its groove back, and Mega Man returned for his tenth NES-style adventure. In addition, a couple of all-time classics enjoyed ambitious reimaginings with GoldenEye 007 and Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions. All of the games in this category did a masterful job staying true to what made these properties great in the first place and injecting them with new life.

A **Donkey Kong Country Returns**
B **GoldenEye 007**
C **Mega Man 10**
D **NBA Jam**
E **Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions**
F **Sonic the Hedgehog 4: Episode 1**



47

Power Profiles



DATE OF BIRTH
February 9, 1979

BIRTHPLACE
Tokyo, Japan

POSITION
Development director, Team Ninja

BEST KNOWN FOR
Collaborating on Metroid: Other M, not wearing sunglasses indoors

FAVORITE FOOD
Ice cream

CURRENT PROJECTS
Dead or Alive Dimensions

Yosuke Hayashi

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINA EMPEDOCLES

Over the past decade, no studio has been as singularly responsible for its publisher's successes as Team Ninja has been for Tecmo (now Tecmo Koei). The group that gave us Ninja Gaiden and Dead or Alive was led by the famously outspoken Tomonobu Itagaki until he left the company in 2008. The man chosen to fill his shoes was Yosuke Hayashi, a nine-year veteran of the studio who produced and directed many of its recent hits. Though not as boastful as his predecessor, Hayashi has demonstrated a comparable knack for delivering tightly crafted action games—most recently as director of Metroid: Other M. Next year he'll try his directorial hand at the fighting genre for the first time with Dead or Alive Dimensions for the Nintendo 3DS system.

NINTENDO POWER
How did you originally get into video games?
YOSUKE HAYASHI
I wanted to find a line of work that I could completely devote myself to. Something that I could put all my energy and passion into, and something that could give happiness and joy to people. I really didn't want to end up being a guy down the road, working in a job that made people's lives miserable. Luck came my way and I was met with a chance to get into game development. I've loved games since I was a kid and I was instantly determined to make this a profession that would define who I become. Truth be told, I have never felt any excruciating hardships along the way because making games is so much fun!

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?
I wanted to become a game creator for the NES, even though I had no clue as to how games were made. Thinking back now, you could say that my dream came true after all!

How were you introduced to video games? What kinds of games did you play when you were younger?
When I was six I had my first encounter with the NES at my relatives' place. This encounter was so stunning that it would shape my life in the years to come. The game I really got into was Popeye on the NES. I went to my relatives' house almost every day, and when my parents came to drag me back home, I remember whining like a little baby. When my relatives moved away from my hometown, I got my parents to buy me an NES and Super Mario Bros. Like many of your readers, I imagine, I was crazy about the game. To this day, I still remember exactly where the Goombas and Koopa Troopas appear, and the exact way to beat each stage. It's second nature to me.

Your studio, Team Ninja, is renowned for its work on action games and 3D fighters. Are there any other genres that you personally would like to explore?
To me, one of the best characteristics of action games is the ability to directly control what you do. It's because of this very factor, which I like so much, that I wouldn't want to try my hand at other genres. If you look at many other games out there, you can classify them as action games—even sandbox-type games—because the span of what defines an action game is really broad. I feel the genre has so much more potential, and I want to proactively explore that potential to deliver an action title that will blow gamers away.

In your opinion, what's the key to making a great action game?
A great action game should be something that you make through sense and feeling. And then play it and play it until that feeling is just right. An action game is something that cannot be made to specifications or simple ideas. It needs to be tried and tested strenuously.

You recently collaborated with Nintendo's Yoshio Sakamoto on Metroid: Other M. What was that experience like, and how did it differ from developing one of Team Ninja's own titles?
The best part of that experience was the gaining of a better sense of self-awareness through knowing more about others. Working with Sakamoto-san, who has been on the front line of game development for years, really gives you a much deeper insight into the different philosophies and concepts that drive development. This was really the first time I started to understand the depth of this profession, and it was something that gave me the opportunity to get to know myself much better.

While working with his team there were many cultural differences between our studios, but in the end I was pleasantly surprised to find how similar our goals and values were. It might be a bit difficult to explain through a short summary, but all I can say is that we were on the same page regarding what makes the life of a game developer. Beliefs and concepts, flexibility, passion and enthusiasm, and the ability to keep cool in high-pressure situations.

Was there anything you learned from Sakamoto that you feel will help you as a designer moving forward?
There were quite a few things, actually. One of the biggest was to learn how to stir up emotions through your games and not just make those emotions burst out and explode. The games that Team Ninja gave birth to up to now have been all about directly stimulating and "attacking" people's most basic emotions. When you think about it, our daily lives are not just filled with raw emotion. One more thing is that there are so many more varied and complex emotions in people than the four basic ones of happiness, anger, sadness, and joy. Working with Sakamoto-san, I

GAMEOGRAPHY

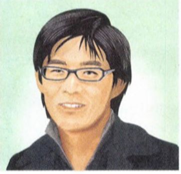
Hayashi has spent his entire career with Team Ninja, most of it working on the Ninja Gaiden series. As the combat design lead for the first Ninja Gaiden on Xbox, he played a key role in the franchise's rise to prominence.

DEAD OR ALIVE 3
2001, XBOX
CAMERA SCRIPT

NINJA GAIDEN
2004, XBOX
COMBAT DESIGN LEAD

NINJA GAIDEN BLACK
2005, XBOX
PROJECT MANAGER

Power Profiles



discovered that stirring up those complex emotions in people can lead to a much more visceral form of entertainment.

You took over the reins of Team Ninja a couple of years ago. Moving forward, do you feel it's important to put your own creative stamp on Ninja Gaiden and Dead or Alive? If so, how do you find the right balance between that and retaining the elements that made those franchises so popular in the first place?
Games are given birth by people who create them. The creators' DNA somehow makes its way into the game. Taking this into account, upcoming Team Ninja games will have a different flavor. This is something I do not intend to conceal from players. I've been at Team Ninja for quite some time now. I have been working on the Ninja Gaiden and DOA series all this time, and what I can say now from my team's and from my own perspective is that these series need to change to fit this day and age, so I would like gamers to try them out and judge for themselves. I love these series and I want gamers around the world to love them as much as I do. This is our inspiration in making these games.

How is Team Ninja different now than it was under your predecessor?
Previously, the decisions were made by very few team members. Now the whole team actively works in unison to come up with ideas that would improve our games. I think that you'll be able to sense that in our upcoming work.

Outside of Ryu Hayabusa, who's your favorite ninja?
If I leave out some of them, they'll get jealous and assassinate me, so I'm too scared to say.

If we're not mistaken, Team Ninja is currently working on three different projects. Has the team grown recently to accommodate this heavier workload?
Yes. Some very experienced and talented staff who previously worked at other Tecmo studios have been merged into Team Ninja. This has been a huge help to the team and will definitely boost our performance.

Recently, many of your peers—most famously Keiji Inafune—have been critical of the current state of game development in Japan. Do you agree that Japanese development has fallen behind? And if so, what can be done to turn things around?

> *"Now the whole team actively works in unison to come up with ideas that would improve our games."*

The trouble with recent Japanese games is that they have been continuing past trends of game design. Every single aspect of the game is not tested enough to determine whether it's fun, and developers take for granted that these will work out fine if left the same as previous games. This is one of the biggest problems that is hindering Japanese developers. Generally speaking, people do not like change. It is intimidating and poses a huge burden. I think that this very thing is what is causing problems in the Japanese gaming industry because it has a very long history. Even so, I am not going to cry and despair. Up to now, it's always been the fact that we don't need to change anything because we were just fine and dandy. Now the situation has changed and we need to change. Japan has carved a large portion of gaming history over the years, and I believe that Japanese developers can learn from their mistakes and open up a new chapter in gaming in the years to come. After all, Japanese people are hard workers!

When you're stumped by a particularly difficult problem during game development, what's your process for working through it?
The best approach is to share the vision of the game with the rest of the team. This is something that is very difficult to achieve, so we are doing our best to talk to each other and get on the same page. So much time is actually needed to sit down and discuss different thoughts and ideas. You just can't do this by email. When I am at the studio, 90% of my time is spent discussing the project like this with the rest of the team.

What other games or game creators do you most admire or respect?
In my childhood, I played so many games that just took my breath away. Even now, when I see a fantastic game, I'm struck by how great games are and what they can express. I've had the chance to meet many of the people who made such fantastic games, and I think that they are all unique and incredible in their own respect. There are many such people in the industry, so it's really difficult to choose one person that stands out.

Whose works in other forms of media, such as film or literature, do you most admire or enjoy?
I enjoy many different types of media. For literature, it would have to be Shiba Ryotaro. For movies, Pixar's *Toy Story 3* is my favorite.

What is your favorite hobby or pastime?
Games! Games! Games!

If you could have one superpower, what would it be and why?
It would be the ability to freeze time. You can make only so many awesome games if you just make one per year. But if I could freeze time, I could make so many more games that people could enjoy.

GAMEOGRAPHY

NINJA GAIDEN SIGMA
2007, PLAYSTATION 3
ASSISTANT PRODUCER, DIRECTOR

隼の里
Karma
151904

NINJA GAIDEN: DRAGON SWORD
2008, NINTENDO DS
PRODUCER, DIRECTOR

NINJA GAIDEN SIGMA 2
2009, PLAYSTATION 3
PRODUCER, DIRECTOR

METROID: OTHER M
2010, Wii
PRODUCER, DIRECTOR

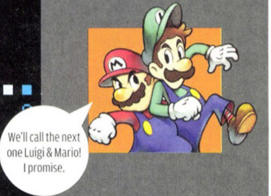
COMIC HEROES

THE MAGAZINE ALL COMICS FANS HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR...

3 FREE GIFTS!
SIDEKICK COMIC
READ NEW STRIPS FROM BRYAN TALBOT, PAT MILLS, EDDIE CAMPBELL AND MORE!
HELLBOY BPRD SEW-ON PATCH
GIANT DOUBLE SIDED POSTER
COMICS • GRAPHIC NOVELS • MOVIES • TV • GAMES
NEW! ISSUE TWO
COMIC HEROES
CAPTAIN AMERICA LIVES!
THE NEW MOVIE, THE COMICS, THE CLASSIC STORIES – EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW!
GREEN LANTERN/ GREEN ARROW
Their classic '70s road trip revisited
DEVIL INSIDE
Mike Mignola talks all things Hellboy
COMICS CRAZY! THE ONLY MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO ALL THINGS COMICS!
PLUS!
PREACHER NEMESIS THE WARLOCK CHARLIE ADLARD
STAN LEE HOW TO WRITE COMICS AND
3 FREE GIFTS!
• Giant double sided poster
• BPRD sew-on patch
• Sidekick sampler comic
The FLASH
AFTER THE BLACKEST NIGHT COMES THE BRIGHTEST DAY
BUREAU FOR PARANORMAL RESEARCH AND DEFENSE
PLUS!
NEW!
SIDEKICK
THE BEST NEW COMICS PREVIEWED INSIDE!
Featuring...
GRANDVILLE MON AMOUR By BRYAN TALBOT
THE PLAYWRIGHT By EDDIE CAMPBELL & DAREN WHITE
AMERICAN REAPER By PAT MILLS & CLINT LANGLEY
Plus! THE RAINBOW ORCHID, DORIS DANGER GIANT MONSTER ADVENTURES, NOT ONE MINUTE OF SILENCE & URBAN BEASTS

COMIC HEROES ISSUE 2 ON SALE NOW

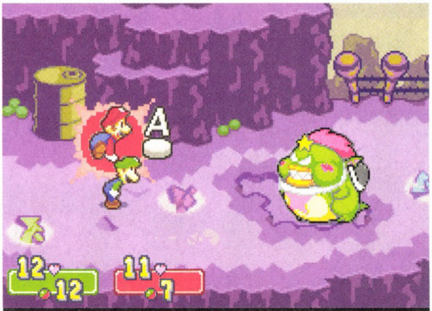
WWW.COMICHEROESMAGAZINE.COM


We'll call the next one Luigi & Mario! I promise.

Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga

An epic game full of epic laughs. You will have chortles.

PLATFORM: **GAME BOY ADVANCE**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **ALPHADREAM**
RELEASE DATE: **NOVEMBER 2003**
COVERED IN ISSUES: **169, 170, 174, 175, 176, 177**
NUMBER OF MARIO SHOWER SCENES: **1**



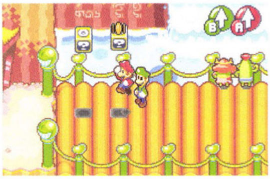
Mario and Luigi know that the best way to defeat a boss is to distract him with a dazzling display of leapfrog prowess.

Mario games can generate a wide range of reactions within a player: joy after defeating a challenging boss, frustration when a carefully planned jump comes up a bit short, excitement when discovering a hidden power-up, tension when granted a few fleeting moments of invincibility. Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga introduced another component, though: raucous laughter.

Instead of being a platformer like most Mario titles, Superstar Saga is a role-playing game descended from the likes of Super Mario RPG for the Super NES and Paper Mario for Nintendo 64 (although it doesn't belong to either of those series). The Mario Bros. confront their enemies in turn-based battles, and there is a much greater emphasis on story than in most Mario adventures.

This time around, an evil witch named Cackletta from the Beanbean Kingdom has stolen Princess Peach's voice and replaced it with explosive jibberish. The situation is so bad that Bowser refuses to kidnap Peach, as her high-powered vocabulary will destroy his castle. Naturally, Mario and Luigi set off to the Beanbean Kingdom to save the day.

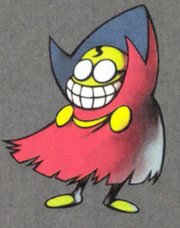
The goofy premise is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the game's humor. There's a lot of dialogue here, and most of it is really, really funny. And we don't mean "mildly amusing" funny; we mean "set the GBA down for a few moments and crack up" funny. There are language laughs, but there's loads of physical humor, too, thanks to the game's brilliantly animated sprites.



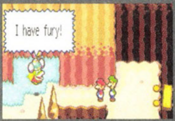
Of course, jokes would mean little if the game attached to them wasn't fun, but that's not a problem here. Superstar Saga may not be an incredibly deep RPG, but its relatively simple nature keeps it enjoyable, as does the fact that there's a lot more action than you'll find in a typical RPG. While wandering around the Beanbean Kingdom, you'll partake of all sorts of platforming and puzzles, and even the battles require precise timing to effectively attack and counterattack the enemy.

Superstar Saga's unique blend of role-playing, action, and comedy makes it one of the most memorable titles for the Game Boy Advance. Luckily, it also kicked off its own series that's provided two excellent Nintendo DS sequels: Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time and Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story. All three are definitely worth your while. **—PHIL T.**

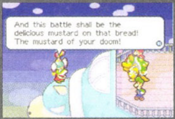
SAGA STEALER



Sometimes a game introduces a character that ends up taking on a life of its own. In Superstar Saga, that character is Fawful. Although initially seen as simply Cackletta's accomplice, Fawful quickly becomes the more engaging villain. He has a loud, wild personality, and he spends more time taunting the good guys than he does fighting them. His most memorable trait, however, is his bizarre speech pattern. From his broken grammar to his bizarre metaphors, just about every line out of Fawful's mouth is quotable. Thankfully, this little guy we love to hate (or is that hate to love?) returns in Superstar Saga's sequels.



I have fury!



And this battle shall be the delicious mustard on that bread! The mustard of your doom!

HAVE A FAVORITE CLASSIC GAME YOU'D LIKE TO SEE REVISITED?
Send us your requests—we'll consider them for a future installment of Playback. nintendopower@futureus.com

REVIEWS

IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF ALL THE LATEST GAMES

IN THIS SECTION

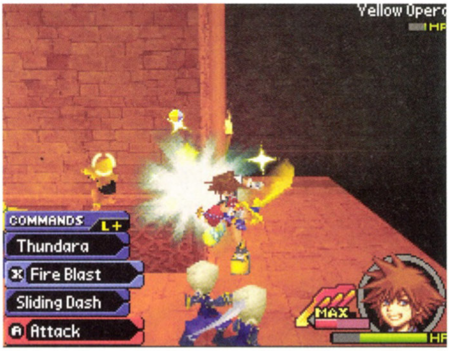
Wii REVIEWS

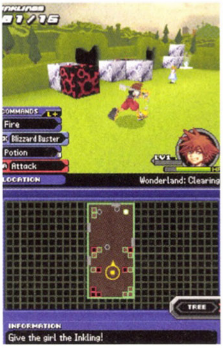
EPIC MICKEY pg.88
LOST IN SHADOW pg.89
SUPER MARIO ALL-STARS pg.84
TRON: EVOLUTION—BATTLE GRIDS pg.84

DS REVIEWS

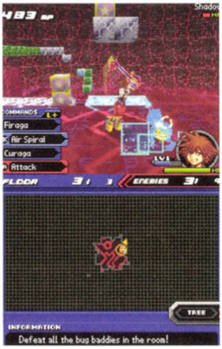
GHOST TRICK: PHANTOM DETECTIVE pg.86
KINGDOM HEARTS RE:CODED pg.82
TRON: EVOLUTION pg.87

Is Kingdom Hearts Re:coded the series's best Nintendo-system installment so far? Turn the page to find out!





Give the girl the Inkling!



Defeat all the bug baddies in the room!

Digital Magic

KINGDOM HEARTS RE:CODED

RATING: 8.0

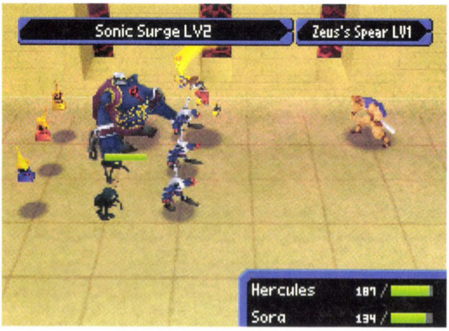
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **SQUARE ENIX**
DEVELOPER: **SQUARE ENIX/H.A.N.D.**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Since its debut in 2002, there's been something special about Kingdom Hearts. The winning combination of Disney worlds and Square Enix properties—supported by fast action, a surprisingly complex story, and Tetsuya Nomura's eye-catching character designs—has captured the attention of millions of gamers around the globe. Each game in the series has been a delight, and the latest chapter, Kingdom Hearts Re:coded, follows suit.

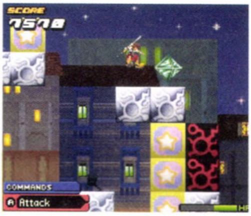
In many ways, Re:coded is the best Kingdom Hearts game to yet grace a Nintendo platform. Though the game engine appears to be identical to that of the previous Nintendo DS handheld title (Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days), several refinements make the gameplay even better. The integration of items, attack techniques, and spells into a single category called Deck Commands makes it much easier to use skills effectively during the heat of battle, while the ability to manipulate the camera via the Control Pad and R Button is far more convenient than controlling the viewing angle with the touch screen alone. This, of course, is on top of an already excellent real-time combat system that's flexible enough for strategists and button-mashers alike.

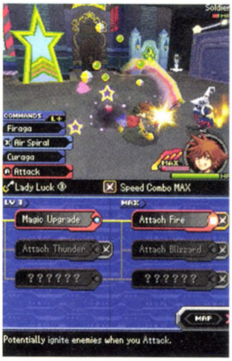
Even the level-up system is enjoyable. The Stat Matrix in Re:coded is similar to the panel system in 358/2 Days in that you must power up your hero by placing chips into slots. But whereas the 358/2 Days panel grid felt like it was always restricting you from reaching full power, it's quite the opposite in Re:coded. This time there are plenty of locations to put your chips; the trick lies in placing them in the most effective spots possible. This is one of the few times I've encountered an atypical level-up system (as opposed to a traditional experience-points-based level-up) that actually adds fun to the game.

Although the combat and game systems have taken a few steps forward, the story (and, as a result, the selection of worlds you travel to) feels stagnant. The plot isn't bad or anything—in fact, delving into the secrets that were lost in Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories (for Game Boy Advance) is pretty neat in concept—but it results in a been-there-done-that feeling. You can visit Destiny Islands, Agrabah, or Olympus Coliseum only so many times before they start to get stale. There are merely a half-dozen or so worlds to explore, and none of them are new; if you've played through

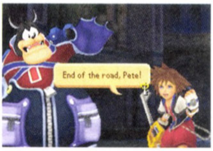


[Above] The turn-based RPG-style battles in Olympus Coliseum exemplify the gameplay variety found in Kingdom Hearts Re:coded.





Potentially ignite enemies when you Attack.

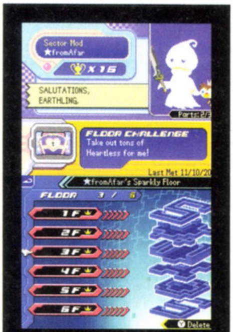


them in the original Kingdom Hearts, Chain of Memories, 358/2 Days, or any of the other titles in the franchise, you'll probably find yourself longing for something fresh. (And would it have killed the composers to remix the music? Sure, the Kingdom Hearts series has an excellent, high-quality soundtrack, but if I hear the Traverse Town theme one more time, I'm gonna mute my DS and whistle the tune to the Main Street Electrical Parade.)

Despite the familiar scenery, the developers have made the most of the tried-and-true locales. Since you're in a digital re-creation of the environments, there are plenty of twists to keep things interesting, not the least of which are the data blocks that appear all over the place, just begging to be smashed. The System Sectors—dungeon areas that look unlike anything else in the Kingdom Hearts universe—also keep the action fresh and help drive the story forward in a satisfying way. (In fact, the story-based game progression is much more fulfilling than the mission-oriented structure of 358/2 Days.)

But it's the varied gameplay you encounter in each world that really adds appeal. Most of Re:coded consists of the third-person exploration and fighting that Kingdom Hearts is usually known for, but at the end of each world (or throughout the entire world, in the case of Olympus Coliseum) the action undergoes a dramatic shift—you'll suddenly find yourself playing an auto-scrolling 2D platformer, a third-person shooter, or a turn-based RPG. And these gameplay styles don't feel tacked on; they're every bit as fun and polished as the rest of the game. As I mentioned in last issue's cover story, the RPG combat, especially, stands out thanks to its fast pace and emphasis on timed button presses for attacking and defending. In any other game these battles could be the main play mechanic, but in Re:coded they're merely the icing on the cake.

Ultimately, where Re:coded falls on your personal Kingdom Hearts quality scale will depend on whether you place more value on gameplay or story. Even with a few cool surprises at the end, Re:coded lacks the narrative depth and emotional resonance of 358/2 Days, and the whole virtual-reality setting makes Re:coded feel somewhat insignificant in the series's overall mythos. But when it comes to action, variety, and the sheer fun of obliterating Heartless with a Keyblade, Re:coded is a more-than-worthwhile entry in the beloved Kingdom Hearts saga. —**CHRIS H.**

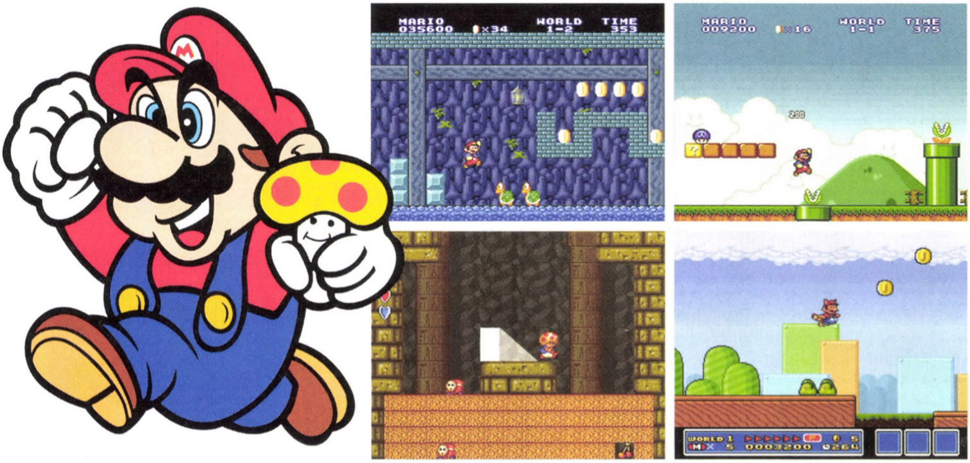


SALUTATIONS, EARTHLING.

Take out tons of Heartless for me!

EXPANDING KINGDOM

Although Kingdom Hearts Re:coded doesn't have a true multiplayer option like Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days, it does have a new Avatar Menu for interacting with friends...and random Kingdom Hearts players you encounter on the street. The mode allows you to exchange customizable levels (called Avatar Sectors) and virtual scratch-off game cards (that reward you with items) with players you cross paths with while your DS is in Tag Mode. You also get to customize your own character (thus the mode's name) that will visit other players' DS systems. Even if you don't come across a lot of people who own the game, fear not—Re:coded will autogenerate levels and scratch cards for you if you leave it in Tag Mode for a while, making that mode worthwhile even if you're a solo gamer.


MARIO 035600 ×34 WORLD 1-2 TIME 353
MARIO 009200 ×16 WORLD 1-1 TIME 375
200
WORLD 1 M×5 0003200 5 264

Anniversary Party

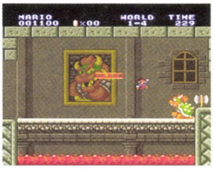
SUPER MARIO ALL-STARS

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

If you're reading this magazine, buying Super Mario All-Stars for the Wii console is a no-brainer. Yes, the game portion of this package is a straight-up Virtual Console–style rerelease of a collection of graphically enhanced games that came out ages ago. Yes, you can play those games in a variety of alternative forms. And yes, some minor tweaks (such as updated title and menu screens) would have been appreciated. But that's not what's important. What's important is that even 25 years after its debut, the Super Mario Bros. series is still as playable as ever.

The games contained within this compilation—Super Mario Bros., Super Mario Bros. 2, Super Mario Bros. 3, and Super Mario Bros.: The Lost Levels—are timeless classics, boasting some of the most legendary gameplay and most memorable video game situations ever created. Stomping Goombas, bashing blocks, powering up with Super Mushrooms, chasing Koopa shells, flinging fireballs, grabbing flagpoles, swimming past Bloopers, snagging invincibility stars, knocking Hammer Bros. from their perches, learning that the princess is in another castle, finding invisible 1-Ups, bouncing off springboards, traveling through warp pipes, fleeing from Lakitu, climbing vines, collecting coins, jumping with the wind, rejecting Poison Mushrooms, discovering World 9, tossing Shy Guys, riding flying carpets, unearthing potions, entering Sub-Space, hurling vegetables, bashing Birdo with his own eggs, floating as the princess, digging through sand, running from Phanto, clobbering Wart, soaring through the air in a Raccoon Suit, dodging Thwomps, sliding down slopes, tricking Boos, playing Warp Whistles, navigating deadly airships, pouncing on Koopalings, activating Switch Blocks, diving in a frog outfit, fighting gargantuan enemies, wearing Kuribo's shoe, ascending towers, surviving an army of tanks, evading Bowser, saving the Mushroom Kingdom—these are the moments that have made gaming what is today, and they're every bit as fun now as they were on their release dates. Despite so many advances in technology, few games can get the adrenaline pumping and the palms sweating like the Super Mario titles can, and the fact that these games are a couple of decades old gives you even more appreciation for their groundbreaking controls and physics.



The games, however, are only part of the deal. In addition to the game disc, Super Mario All-Stars includes an art/history book and a CD soundtrack, both of which span the entire Super Mario series. The book's behind-the-scenes insight gives a rare glimpse into the hard work that goes into Mario's adventures, while the soundtrack contains 10 of the best songs from throughout the series (along with sound effects). Granted, it's easy to ask for even more (it would have been nice if a larger share of the Japanese design notes in the book were translated into English, and I wish a few additional tunes were featured on the CD, such as the Underground Theme from Super Mario Bros.), but what's included is essential reading and listening for any Nintendo enthusiast.

Between the book, the CD, and the fact that the enhanced versions of the four Super Mario games haven't been available on a console since the Super NES, Mario fans have every reason to experience Super Mario All-Stars all over again. And if, by some chance, you've never played these games, immediately run to the nearest store and add this collection to your game library. This is a piece of gaming history that's not to be missed.

—CHRIS H.

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT SERIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE GET AN ENHANCED COMPILATION IN THE VEIN OF SUPER MARIO ALL-STARS?

JUSTIN CHENG

It would be awesome to see updated versions of the NES Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles games—especially if they made the first one easier.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

Metroid. Sure, we got Metroid: Zero Mission on Game Boy Advance, but an enhanced version of Metroid II: Return of Samus is long overdue.

CODY MARTIN

It may be the most obvious pick, but it'd sure be nice to see one for the Legend of Zelda games. After all, besides Mario, Link is Nintendo's right hand man!

DAVID MURPHY

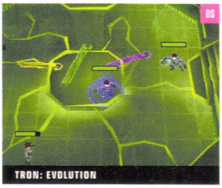
I think Metal Gear 1 and 2 redone in 3D like Metal Gear Solid would blow my mind. They can add in a remake of Snatcher and call it " Kojima Classics!"

CHRIS SLATE

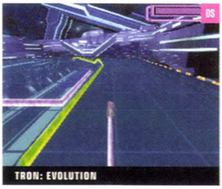
You know what would be cool? A collection of Nintendo's one-hit wonders for the NES; games that didn't spawn long-running series, but were great fun back in the day. I'd love to see Pro Wrestling, Urban Champion, and Mach Rider enhanced with 16-bit graphics.

STEVE THOMASON

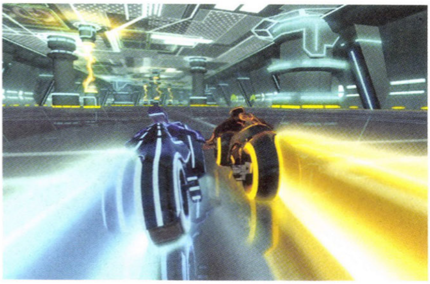
I'm going to go a little bit obscure and say the Panzer Dragoon series. As amazing as the games were for Sega Saturn, they haven't held up particularly well, so I'd love to see them re-done with modern production values.



TRON: EVOLUTION



TRON: EVOLUTION



Back on the Grid

TRON: EVOLUTION

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **DISNEY INTERACTIVE**
DEVELOPER: **N-SPACE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Here's a game that's both pleasantly surprising and mildly disappointing. On one hand, TRON: Evolution takes a big cue from the Legend of Zelda titles on the Nintendo DS handheld, using the latter's boomerang-based challenges as a blueprint for its own Identity Disc puzzles.

The game also includes much of what makes TRON, well, TRON, including Light Cycle races, Recognizer flights, and even tank battles. Generally speaking, there's an impressive amount of variety in the gameplay, not to mention a multiplayer mode and the integration of Disney's DGamer social network.

Where TRON: Evolution starts to fall apart, though, is in the overall execution of its disparate elements. For instance, the combat never feels as tight and responsive as it should, the Light Cycle controls feel a bit too sensitive, and tank battles are a frustrating mix of chaos and luck. The inclusion of so much of the TRON universe is appreciated, but there really isn't much depth to the gameplay.

With more time in the oven, this could have been one of the best licensed games on the Nintendo DS. As it is, it's a passable diversion that should please TRON fans for a few hours. **—DEAN R.**

TRON: EVOLUTION—BATTLE GRIDS

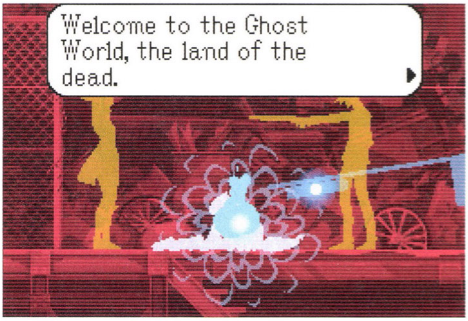
RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **DISNEY INTERACTIVE**
DEVELOPER: **N-SPACE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

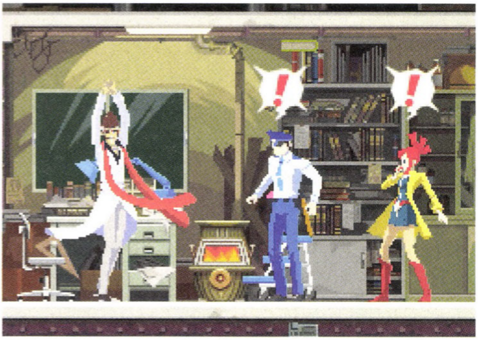
Unlike the original *TRON* movie, in which the Grid Games were a battle to the death, TRON: Evolution—Battle Grids depicts the contests in a much more positive light. The game's story mode doesn't say much about the main TRON storyline; rather it revolves around your custom-designed character going from zero to hero in a quest to become a Game Grids Champion. The story isn't captivating in the least, but the real heart of the game lies in the Grid Games: seven TRON-inspired activity types, including the ever-popular Light Cycles that every TRON fan knows and loves.

Nostalgia aside, the games are decently entertaining and require quick strategic thinking. There's Hyper Ball (hurl balls at the opponent's platform with scoops), Grid Tanks (shoot each other with tanks in an overhead view), Light Discs (the iconic Frisbee game of death), Runner Arena (drive ATV-like machine-gun-equipped vehicles, kid-friendly Twisted Metal-style), Runner Race (involving the same vehicles but on a race track), Light Cycle Arena ("derezz" each other with light trails from your Light Cycle), and Light Cycle Race (exactly as it sounds). At first I had fun with all the Grid Games, but after a few rounds the action grew stale. Only the Light Cycle Arena and Light Cycle Race game types remained enjoyable after the story mode ended. The other grid games improve when you're up against human players, but with the content being heavily multiplayer-based, the biggest letdown is that there's no Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection component besides leaderboards. There's some good content here (especially where the Light Cycles are concerned), but the game is undeniably limited.

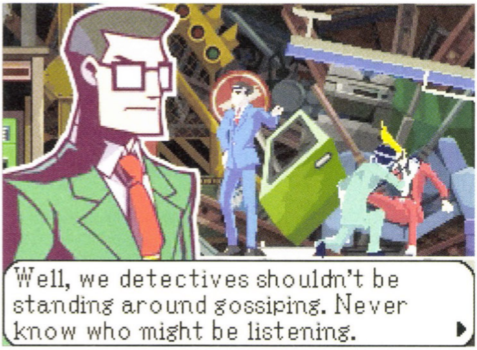
—CODY M.



Welcome to the Ghost World, the land of the dead.



Ghost with the Most



Well, we detectives shouldn't be standing around gossiping. Never know who might be listening.

GHOST TRICK: PHANTOM DETECTIVE

RATING: 9.0

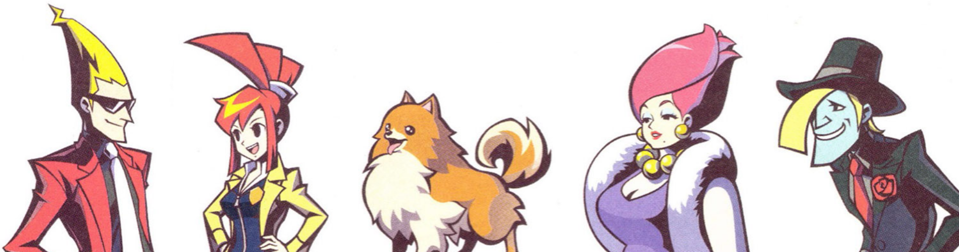
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM**
ESRB: **TEEN**

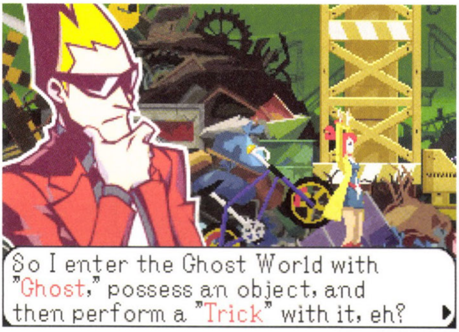
Ghost Trick: Phantom Detective is a game that I just didn't want to put down. From the moment I entered its peculiar world of disembodied spirits, chicken-chomping heroes, and blue-skinned bad guys I was captivated, and wanted to keep playing until I had discovered the identity of pointy-haired protagonist Sissel, figured out why he was killed, and solved the myriad other mysteries that were tied to his fate. Considering that Ghost Trick is the latest project from Phoenix Wright creator Shu Takumi, it shouldn't come as a surprise that the top-notch writing and the gripping yet lighthearted story are among the game's highlights. In fact, since Ghost Trick is built around a single, lengthy narrative (as opposed to the Phoenix Wright games' episodic structure), the story here is arguably more compelling than in Takumi's past titles.

The characters are immediately likeable, as well. Sissel may be dead and he may not have his memory, but he's nonetheless extremely appealing, and the same can be said for the rest of the over-the-top cast. From energetic detective Lynne to disco-dancing Inspector Cabanela to a talking dog named Missile (it totally makes sense in context), the quirky characters are bursting with personality, making for one of the most memorable ensembles in recent history.

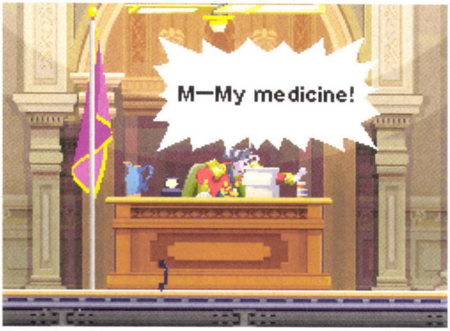
The characters' individuality is reinforced through some amazingly intricate animations that are among the most impressive things I've seen on the Nintendo DS handheld. Sure, all the posing, flipping, and dancing is a little weird (some might call it superfluous, especially when it slows down the game's pacing), but the result is a stunning visual display that fits the game world like a glove.

But the characters and story are only part of Ghost Trick's appeal. The point-and-click

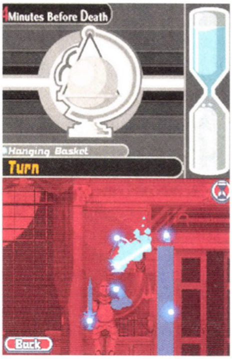


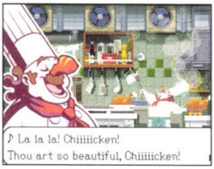


So I enter the Ghost World with "Ghost," possess an object, and then perform a "Trick" with it, eh?



[Below, right] Believe it or not, the guy singing to the roasted chicken is one of the more normal characters you'll encounter in Ghost Trick.





♪ La la la! Chiiiiicken!
Thou art so beautiful, Chiiiiicken!

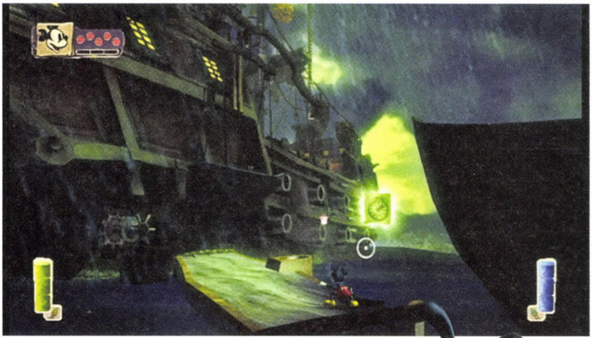
gameplay is fairly simple, but it's extremely gratifying—and it's unlike anything else out there. Controlling Sissel's spirit, you can move from object to object by using the Ghost command, and once you've possessed an object you can usually make it perform an action (for example, opening a cabinet door) by pressing the Trick button. The genius lies in the level layouts; each stage is essentially a puzzle in which you must figure out how to maneuver around the environment (you can move only to objects within a specific range) and use well-timed tricks to influence the actions of the people and items around you. You'll unfold ladders, turn on fans, roll carts, open doors, activate water fountains, wave flags, swing swords, and much more; the fun part is figuring out how to string together these actions while nonplayable characters are moving about. Once you do, the result is a brilliantly rewarding Rube Goldberg-esque sequence of cause and effect.

The amount of freedom you're given is perfect; there are just enough options to make you feel like you have plenty of choices, but never so many that you're clueless about what do next. Admittedly, there is some trial and error involved—it's possible to mess up a sequence so it's not winnable, requiring you to rewind time and start the task over—but discovering how everything works and then applying that knowledge on the next attempt is part of the fun. (Luckily, there are midstage checkpoints to ensure that you won't have to replay too much if you fail.) And though the basic Ghost and Trick abilities provide plenty of gameplay possibilities on their own, the developers have mixed in some nice variety to keep things exciting; there's one stealth-based stage in which you must guide an escaping prisoner from safe spot to safe spot while avoiding enemy guards, along with a few stages in which you control a second character who has his own distinct supernatural talents.

However, it's almost unfair to break down Ghost Trick and evaluate it as a collection of parts. What makes the game so enthralling is how the gameplay, animation, writing, characters, and story complement each other to drive the adventure forward and craft an experience in which you can't wait to see what happens next. That's not to say Ghost Trick is without flaws; the exposition near the end of the game borders on Midichlorian-style overkill, and though every plot thread is neatly concluded, I was a little disappointed that the bad guys' story arc didn't reach a traditional resolution. (I also thought the reveal of Sissel's secret past could have been cooler, but maybe that's because I had already figured it out.) In this case, though, the journey is just as important as the destination, and there are enough neat twists along the way to satisfy any mystery aficionado.

If you're an Ace Attorney fan, a point-and-click adventure fan, or simply a fan of quality storytelling in general, don't miss out on Ghost Trick. It's sure to be one of the best DS games of 2011.

—CHRIS H.



Cartoon Classic

EPIC MICKEY

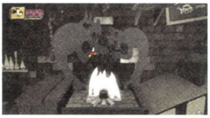
RATING: 8.5

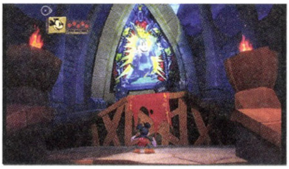
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **DISNEY**
DEVELOPER: **JUNCTION POINT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Rarely has a video game featured a setting and backstory as intriguing as Epic Mickey's. Given surprising freedom to play with Disney's 87-year history, acclaimed designer Warren Spector has crafted a wonderfully bizarre and twisted love letter to the company's creative legacy. It's a universe that will immediately enthrall his fellow aficionados and make everyone else eager to hop on the bandwagon.

Through a twist of fate caused by his own mischievousness, Mickey finds himself in a realm for cartoons that have been forgotten. Its original occupant and beloved ruler is Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, who was cocreated by Walt Disney in the 1920s and was essentially Mickey's predecessor. In fact, the famous mouse likely wouldn't exist if Disney hadn't lost the rights to Oswald in 1928. But while Mickey went on to become a household name, Oswald eventually faded into obscurity. Epic Mickey marks the first time these characters have appeared onscreen together, and their interactions serve as the linchpin for a fun, and at times even touching, tale. Hopefully Oswald gets a second chance at stardom, because he pretty much steals every scene in which he appears. (Plus, his old cartoons—one of which you can unlock in the game—are absolutely brilliant.)

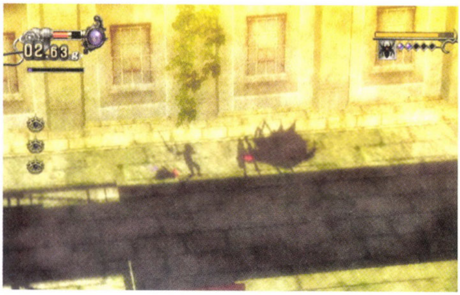
Against this fascinating backdrop, you'll find a mix of platforming and Zelda-inspired adventure imbued with a unique gameplay hook—using paint and thinner to manipulate your cartoon surroundings. You'll wield those tools to accomplish a variety of objectives, and they're put to particularly clever use during the game's imaginative boss battles. What's more, open-ended design allows for multiple solutions to most problems, and in keeping with Spector's philosophy of "playstyle matters," your choices have meaningful consequences. It all adds up to an experience unlike anything else out there. Yet I can't help but feel like Junction Point could have pushed things even further. As ambitious as many of Epic Mickey's concepts are, they too often fall back on the same rudimentary applications, preventing them from realizing their full potential. Spotty pointer controls and a less-than-stellar camera occasionally hamper things, as well.

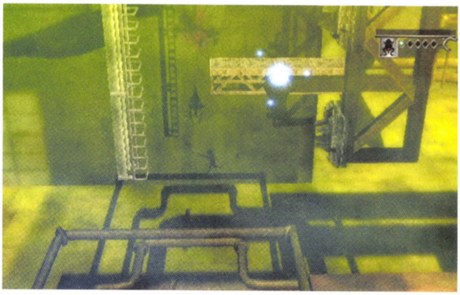




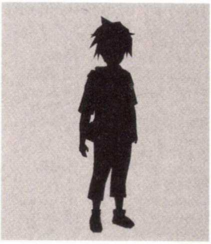
When a game reaches for such stratospheric heights, though, it's easy to forgive a few shortcomings. Especially when said game gets so much else right. Some truly inspired art direction draws you into Epic Mickey's beautifully corrupted locales, and James Dooley's diverse orchestral score captures that hard-to-define Disney magic. Then there's the fact that you travel from one world to the next via brief side-scrolling stages based on classic Disney shorts. If you grew up watching Mickey and friends, these are sure to bring a smile to your face. And everything is steeped in an impressive attention to detail that illustrates how much passion went into this project.

Bold, inventive, yet deeply reverent, Epic Mickey makes us *really* care about its legendary protagonist for the first time in years and stands as his greatest video game to date. Now we'd love to see what Spector and company can do with a certain miserly duck. **—STEVE T.**





Darkness Reigns



LOST IN SHADOW

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **HUDSON**
DEVELOPER: **HUDSON**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

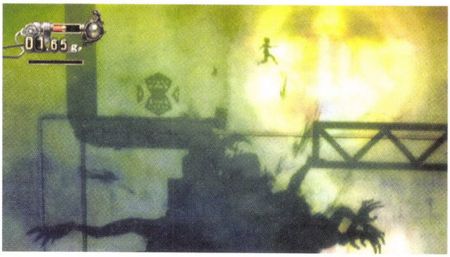
Brilliant—that word that came to my mind a lot while playing Lost in Shadow. This is a puzzle-platformer unlike any other on Wii, casting you in the role of a boy's shadow that, along with the fairylike Spangle, must ascend to the top of a massive tower to reunite with the boy's physical body. Because you are a shadow, you can interact only with the other shadows; shadows of walls become floors, for example, and shadows of spikes on the walls become hazards to jump over. As light sources change—which you can sometimes make happen by directing Spangle (via the Wii Remote controller's pointer) at interactive items in the physical world—the landscape changes, granting you access to areas that you wouldn't be able to reach otherwise. The puzzles are clever, giving you a sense of accomplishment for solving them.

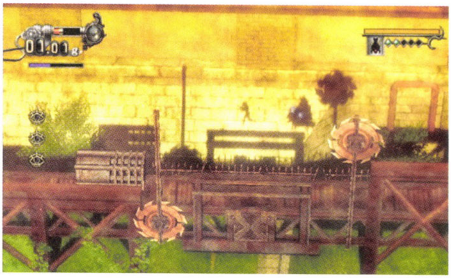
As much as we appreciate the way Lost in Shadow makes you figure out how to proceed, it's fantastic that the game also includes elements such as sword-based combat and the aforementioned platforming. The former is on the simple side—you can chain together up to three strikes—but hacking and slashing baddies (giant red-eyed spiders, for instance) provides a welcome diversion from the usual puzzle-solving. The unfortunate thing about combat is that the attack button (B) is the same button you use to interact with objects and to activate Spangle's radar (so that you can find some of said interactive objects). Fortunately, this caused irritation only a couple of times when I played—mainly when I would try to attack but would activate the radar instead because I inadvertently had the remote pointed at the screen. There were also a couple of times that the boy's shadow wouldn't grab a platform's ledge when it seemed like it should—thus sending the shadow plummeting into oblivion.

These are relatively minor quibbles, however; sure, these issues are annoying when they happen, but they don't happen all that often. No, my main complaint with Lost in Shadow is its pacing. Just when you think you've reached the end of your journey, you discover that you have even more adventuring to do. Granted, like the rest of the game, it is mostly fun (though there is a fair amount of backtracking involved, especially if you want to find all the memories—which reveal story bits and increase your health bar—strewn throughout the tower) and is always aesthetically pleasing, thanks to the dreamlike art style. But as it heads into the final act this game proves that you *can* have a bit too much of a good thing.

Although it's certainly not a *perfect* game, when Lost in Shadow is good, it's *very* good. It's a creative and distinctive adventure in terms of both graphics and gameplay—rare qualities in this day and age—making this title well worth experiencing for yourself.

—JUSTIN C.





REVIEWS ARCHIVE

THE COMPLETE LIST OF NINTENDO POWER REVIEWS FROM THE PAST YEAR

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS

Wii

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa	6.5	Electronic Arts	254	E
All Star Karate	7.0	THQ	255	E10+
Arc Rise Fantasia	7.5	Ignition	256	T
Attack of the Movies 3D	4.0	Majesco	255	T
Avatar: The Game	5.0	Ubisoft	250	T
Batman: The Brave and the Bold: The Video Game	7.0	Warner Bros. Interactive	260	E10+
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare: Reflex	9.0	Activision	249	M
Calling	5.0	Hudson	253	T
Create	5.0	Electronic Arts	262	E
Data East Arcade Classics	6.5	Majesco	252	T
Deca Sports 3	4.5	Hudson	261	E
Despicable Me: The Game	4.0	D3Publisher	258	E10+
DJ Hero	8.5	Activision	249	T
DJ Hero 2	9.0	Activision	262	T
Donkey Kong Country Returns	8.5	Nintendo	262	E
Endless Ocean: Blue World	7.5	Nintendo	252	E10+
FIFA Soccer 11	8.0	Electronic Arts	260	E
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers	8.0	Square Enix	250	T
FlingSmash	7.5	Nintendo	261	E
Flip's Twisted World	6.0	Majesco	260	E
Fragile Dreams: Farewell Ruins of the Moon	5.5	XSEED	253	T
GoldenEye 007	8.5	Activision	262	T
Green Day: Rock Band	8.0	MTV	256	T
Guilty Party	7.0	Disney	259	E
Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock	8.0	MTV	261	T
Gunblade NY & LA Machineguns Arcade Hits Pack	5.5	Sega	259	T
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows—Part 1	4.0	Electronic Arts	262	T
Iron Man 2	4.0	Sega	256	T
Ivy the Kiwi?	7.5	XSEED	259	E
Jambo! Safari	3.5	Sega	250	E
Kirby's Epic Yarn	8.5	Nintendo	261	E
The Last Airbender	6.0	THQ	257	T
LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4	7.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	257	E10+
LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	6.5	LucasArts	249	E10+
LEGO Rock Band	8.0	Warner Bros. Interactive	249	E10+
Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole	4.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	260	E10+
The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn's Quest	5.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	260	T
Madden NFL 11	8.5	Electronic Arts	258	E
Major League Baseball 2K10	7.0	2K Sports	253	E
Metroid: Other M	8.5	Nintendo	259	T
Michael Jackson: The Experience	6.5	Ubisoft	262	E10+
Monster Hunter Tri	9.0	Capcom	254	T
MySims Skyheroes	7.5	Electronic Arts	260	E10+
Namco Museum Megamix	5.0	Namco Bandai	261	E
Naruto Shippuden: Clash of Ninja Revolution 3	7.5	Tomy	249	T
Naruto Shippuden: Dragon Blade Chronicles	4.5	Tomy	262	E10+
NBA 2K11	6.5	2K Sports	261	E
NBA Jam	9.0	Electronic Arts	260	E
Need for Speed Nitro	7.0	Electronic Arts	249	E10+
New Super Mario Bros. Wii	9.0	Nintendo	249	E
NHL Slapshot	6.0	Electronic Arts	259	E
No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle	9.0	Ubisoft	252	M
Pac-Man Party	4.5	Namco Bandai	262	E10+
Pinball Hall of Fame: The Gottlieb Collection	6.5	Crave	251	E
Pirates Plundarrr	4.0	Majesco	255	E10+
PokéPark Wii: Pikachu's Adventure	7.5	Nintendo	261	E
Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	8.0	Ubisoft	255	T
Pro Evolution Soccer 2010	8.0	Konami	250	E
Rabbids Go Home	7.0	Ubisoft	249	E10+
Racquet Sports	6.5	Ubisoft	253	E
Raving Rabbids Travel In Time	6.5	Ubisoft	262	E10+
Red Steel 2	8.0	Ubisoft	254	T
Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles	8.0	Capcom	249	M
Rock Band 3	9.0	MTV	261	T
Sakura Wars: So Long, My Love	7.5	NIS America	253	T
Sam & Max: Beyond Time and Space	8.0	Atari	255	T
Samurai Warriors 3	6.0	Nintendo	260	T

MORE ON:

FLIP'S TWISTED WORLD

I thoroughly disagree with our reviewer's main criticism of Flip's Twisted World; there is no problem with the world-rotation play mechanic. It's easy to use, and you're not likely to accidentally fall to your doom unless you're just not paying attention. This platformer also looks great and features some really nifty puzzles. On the other hand, it's a bit glitchy, and parts of it (such as the sound effects) seem unfinished. —CHRIS H.

MORE ON:

GOLDENEYE 007

I've never been the biggest fan of first-person shooters, but I did enjoy the original GoldenEye 007 back in the N64 days. It was simple but fun, controlled really well, and nailed the James Bond vibe. So while I still wasn't chomping at the bit to play an FPS all these years later, I decided to try the new GoldenEye for Wii—and I'm glad that I did. While the game has plenty to offer advanced shooter fans, as an FPS novice, I appreciate how easy it is to pick up and get into. The action controls very well, the cinematic flow of the game keeps pushing you forward, and the Bond charm is still there. If you're like me and only dabble in shooters, this is the one to try. —CHRIS S.

MORE ON:

CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS

Even though I encountered a few annoying glitches while playing Black Ops, the game's thrilling solo campaign and addictive online multiplayer make it a must-play title. With the releases of both this and GoldenEye 007, it's a great time to be a Wii-owning first-person-shooter fan. —JUSTIN C.

Checkpoint Reached
7/75

Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	7.0	Capcom	261	T
Shaun White Snowboarding: World Stage	7.0	Ubisoft	249	E
Shiren the Wanderer	6.5	Atlus	252	T
Sid Meier's Pirates!	8.5	2K Games	260	E10+
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	8.0	Konami	249	M
Sin and Punishment: Star Successor	9.0	Nintendo	257	T
The Sky Crawlers: Innocent Aces	7.0	XSEED	250	T
Sonic Colors	9.0	Sega	261	E
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	8.0	Sega	252	E
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	8.0	Activision	260	T
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes	5.0	LucasArts	249	T
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	8.0	LucasArts	261	T
Super Mario Galaxy 2	9.5	Nintendo	256	E
Super Monkey Ball Step & Roll	5.5	Sega	252	E
Swords	5.0	Majesco	260	T
Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars	9.0	Capcom	251	T
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	9.0	Electronic Arts	256	E
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	6.0	Ubisoft	262	T
Tournament of Legends	7.0	Sega	257	T
Toy Story 3: The Video Game	7.5	Disney	257	E10+
Transformers: Cybertron Adventures	5.0	Activision	258	T
Trauma Team	8.0	Atlus	255	T
Wii Party	7.5	Nintendo	260	E
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2011	7.5	THQ	262	T

Nintendo DS

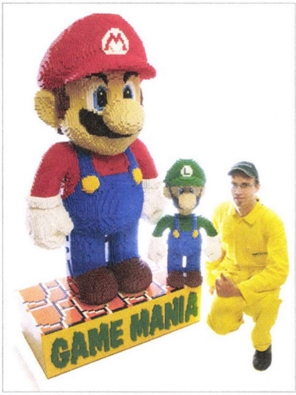
TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Ace Attorney Investigations: Miles Edgeworth	8.0	Capcom	252	T
Again	7.0	Tecmo Koei	253	T
Assassin's Creed II: Discovery	7.0	Ubisoft	250	T
Atari's Greatest Hits Vol. 1	5.0	Atari	261	E
Avatar: The Game	5.0	Ubisoft	250	E10+
Beat City	8.5	THQ	254	E
Bejeweled Twist	8.5	PopCap	251	E
Blue Dragon: Awakened Shadow	7.5	D3Publisher	256	E10+
Bookworm DS	8.5	PopCap	249	E
C.O.P. The Recruit	4.0	Ubisoft	249	T
Crafting Mama	7.0	Majesco	261	E
Crime Scene	5.0	SouthPeak	253	M
Dawn of Heroes	7.5	Majesco	253	E10+
Deca Sports DS	5.5	Hudson	253	E
Dementium II	8.0	SouthPeak	255	M
Despicable Me: The Game–Minion Mayhem	7.0	D3Publisher	258	E
Dragon Ball: Origins 2	8.0	Namco Bandai	256	T
Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies	9.0	Nintendo	257	E10+
Etrian Odyssey III: The Drowned City	8.5	Altus	260	E10+
Final Fantasy: The 4 Heroes of Light	8.0	Square Enix	260	E10+
Glory of Heracles	7.0	Nintendo	251	E10+
Golden Sun: Dark Dawn	8.0	Nintendo	262	E10+
Harvest Moon: Grand Bazaar	6.0	Natsume	258	E
Infinite Space	8.0	Sega	253	T
Iron Man 2	6.5	Sega	256	E10+
Ivy the Kiwi?	7.0	XSEED	259	E
The Last Airbender	7.5	THQ	257	E10+
The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks	9.5	Nintendo	250	E10+
LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	5.0	LucasArts	249	E10+
Lufia : Curse of the Sinistrals	8.0	Natsume	260	E10+
Mario vs. Donkey Kong: Mini-Land Mayhem!	7.5	Nintendo	262	E
Mega Man Zero Collection	9.0	Capcom	256	E
Naruto Shippuden: Naruto vs. Sasuke	5.0	Tomy	262	E10+
Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors	9.0	Aksys	262	M
Picross 3D	7.5	Nintendo	255	E
Pokémon HeartGold Version	9.5	Nintendo	253	E
Pokémon Ranger: Guardian Signs	7.0	Nintendo	260	E
Pokémon SoulSilver Version	9.5	Nintendo	253	E
Professor Layton and the Unwound Future	9.0	Nintendo	260	E10+
Puzzle Quest 2	7.5	D3Publisher	257	E10+
Rabbids Go Home	7.0	Ubisoft	249	E
Ragnarok DS	5.0	XSEED	252	E10+
River City Soccer Hooligans	7.0	Aksys	256	T
River City Super Sports Challenge	6.0	Aksys	258	T
Rooms: The Main Building	7.0	Hudson	253	E
Rune Factory 3: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	8.5	Natsume	262	E
Sands of Destruction	7.0	Sega	250	T
Shin Megami Tensei: Strange Journey	8.0	Atlus	253	M
Sonic Colors	7.5	Sega	261	E
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	6.0	Sega	252	E
Sonic Classic Collection	7.0	Sega	253	E
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	7.0	Activision	260	E10+
Squishy Tank	8.0	Natsume	253	E
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	5.5	LucasArts	249	E10+
Super Scribblenauts	8.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	261	E
Tetris Party Deluxe	8.5	Majesco	256	E
Transformers: War for Cybertron	7.0	Activision	258	E10+
WarioWare D.I.Y.	8.5	Nintendo	253	E
WireWay	6.5	Konami	249	E

MORE ON:

TOUCHMASTER: CONNECT

The latest installment of the popular TouchMaster series collects 20 simple games onto on single DS card. There's quite a bit of variety here, but none of the selections stand out as anything special and the presentation is pretty bland. Perhaps the most interesting part of the package is Facebook and Twitter integration for posting high scores. —STEVE T.

0000000
Card PIRATES
Hi Score
0000000
0:00
?
READY!
3
Q
7
8



It took 24,000 LEGO bricks and 96 hours of work to make these two incredible masterpieces. Kudos to you, Mr. Van Haesbroeck.

FANDOM

Super LEGO Bros!

Hardcore dedication and craftsmanship result in fantastic re-creations.

INTRICATE LEGO sculptures are pretty awesome in our book, so it stands to reason that an insanely detailed, larger-than-life version of Mario—along with smaller takes on his comrades Yoshi and Luigi—commands our attention.

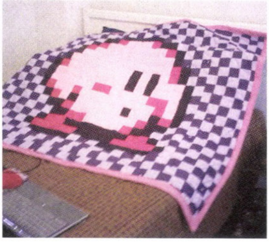
These stunning creations come to us from Dirk Van Haesbroeck, a 32-year-old residential and industrial contractor from Belgium. Van Haesbroeck cultivated his LEGO building talent at a young age, but then entered what he refers to as a dark age of 18 years, during which he neglected his craft. After rediscovering his interest and talent in 2008, he started piecing together stunning renditions of familiar characters and iconography—such as Kenny from South Park and the Oscar statuette from the Academy Awards—but the real showcase of his talents has to be this massive Mario statue. "Is there anything more iconic than Super Mario?" asks Van Haesbroeck rhetorically. "The basic colors of these characters translate perfectly into the common LEGO palette. I just had to build them!"

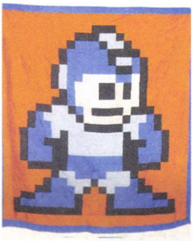
Van Haesbroeck starts his modeling process by planning out the sculpture in a computer program like Bricksmith or by creating a 3D model for larger works. From there, it's a matter of perfectly executing the plans by placing and gluing thousands of LEGO bricks. The Mario sculpture (which was commissioned by Belgian retailer Game Mania then auctioned off for charity) required 150 hours of assembly time for the approximately 42,000 LEGO bricks, 30,000 of which were used to create Mario himself (the rest are in the pedestal).

Although the other sculptures aren't as imposingly large, they still required considerable effort: Yoshi took some 16,000 LEGO bricks and 66 hours of building, while Luigi needed 8,000 bricks and 30 hours of work. Van Haesbroeck chronicled the creation of Mario and Yoshi with sped-up YouTube videos, and at present the Mario video has drawn more than 110,000 views on YouTube. The Yoshi video is nearing that sum.

Van Haesbroeck says he's considering sculptures of Link from The Legend of Zelda or of Toad, calling the latter "a really funny and colorful character." Whatever his next project, we'll be waiting anxiously to see the results—and you can follow his work at www.brick-projects.com (which leads to a Facebook page) or view his creation videos by searching for user "brickprojects" on YouTube.

—**ANDREW H.**





FANDOM

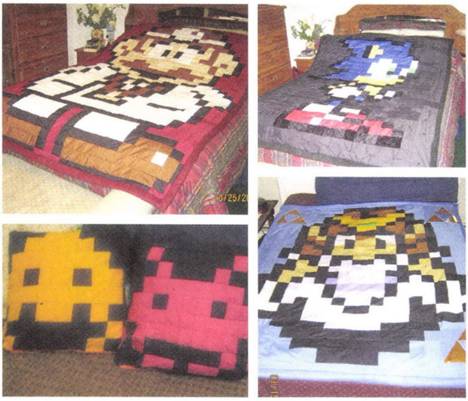
Warm and Pixely

Dr. Mario prescribes old-school warmth and comfort!

Stephanie Rhoads learned from her mother how to sew by hand at a young age, but didn't really embrace the hobby until about five years ago. While working at a craft-supplies retailer, Rhoads began accumulating a large number of fabric scraps until inspiration struck: after seeing a pixel sprite of Mario's legendary 1-Up Mushroom online, she decided to turn those scraps into a quilt-based homage. One quilt led to another, and in the years since she began, the 25-year-old Blanchester, Ohio resident has created several others, including ones based on Link and Zelda, Dr. Mario, Sonic the Hedgehog, and even the NES controller.

Each of the gaming quilts measures around 50 by 60 inches, but amazingly, they're created with rough estimates rather than perfectly measured pieces. "I have never used a ruler or a tape measure when I make them, so I can't be too sure of the exact measurements," she admits.

Rhoads says an average quilt requires $40-60 worth of materials, and she estimates the construction process of each at about two weeks, though she may spend upwards of 14 hours a day sewing in the thick of a project. While we admire her tenacity, we hope this self-described "old-school gamer" isn't sacrificing all of her gaming time for sewing, despite how stellar her creations are! —**ANDREW H.**



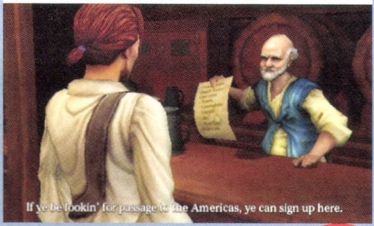
It would be pretty awesome to have a different gaming quilt for each day of the week.

WRITE *your own* CAPTION

SCREEN TEST

SEND CAPTION TO screentest@nintendopower.com.

THIS MONTH'S SHOT

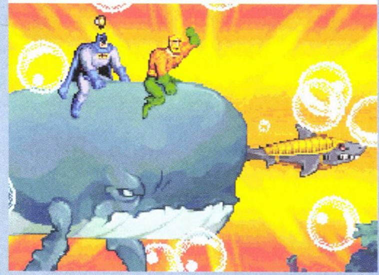


If ye be lookin' for passage to the Americas, ye can sign up here.

No, I was just looking for the passage to the bathroom.

Here's our caption. THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER?

VOLUME 261'S SHOT



"Batman began rethinking his decision to carpool with Aquaman after he relized Aquaman used a real pool." —**TRISKA**

"A disgruntled Batman sat in the back, envious that Aquaman had once again beat him to shotgun." —**BLAKE**

"I'm just saying, Aquaman, the subway would have been much faster." —**SCOFFLOW**

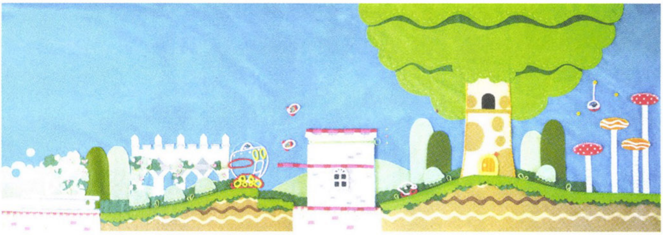
"Why would I ever trade my Wailord for your Sharpedo? He gives me *piggybacks*!" —**POKÉFAN**

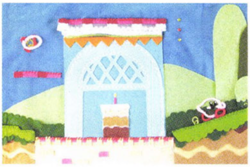
"Whose superpower is useless now, Batman!?" —**DEREK**

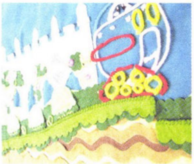
"After riding on a whale with Aquaman for 3 hours, Batman realized Aquaman had no idea where Gotham City was." —**PUFF**

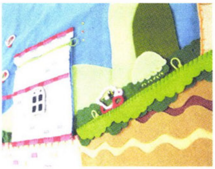
ABOVE *and* BEYOND

Got art, cosplay, case mods, etc.? Send them to us via email to **community@nintendopower.com** or via snail mail to Nintendo Power/Community c/o Future US, 4000 Shoreline Court, STE 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. We'll print the best stuff!









FANDOM

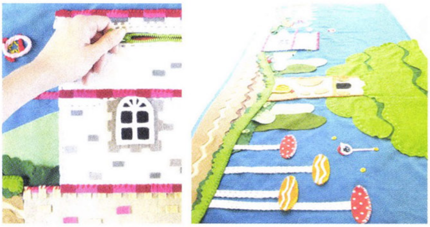
Jenni's Epic Yarn

Digital fabric becomes physical textile artwork.

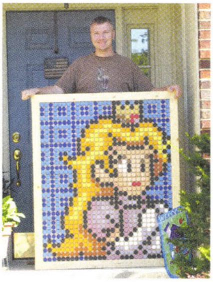
KIRBY'S EPIC YARN transforms the iconic pink blob and his surroundings into a visual symphony of cloth and yarn, but what would all that digital fabric look like if it were brought into the physical world? Jenni Källberg, a self-described creative nerd from Farsta, Sweden, handily answered that question with this wonderful cloth tapestry, which she started shortly after the game made its debut at E3 2010.

"The graphics are so cute and colorful—and I love Kirby—so I thought it would be something really cool to make," explains Källberg, who crafted the piece as a birthday gift for her boyfriend. She began the intricate process of bringing Patch Land and its inhabitants to life by first sketching out the pattern across 20 sheets of paper. Drawing on a decade of experience sewing cosplay ensembles (most recently including Zelda from The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess), the 27-year-old began cutting, gluing, and stitching together the behemoth creation, which comes in at more than 6.5 feet wide and just under 2.5 feet tall.

The product not only captures the general feel of the game—with multiple yarn-based versions of Kirby traversing the tapestry—but also contains several impressive details, such as an actual zipper and the red tabs on the patches Kirby pulls up to reveal hidden goodies. Källberg says the project took about a month of work and just over $20 (US) in materials, but she's not quite finished—she hopes to shield this awesome tribute behind glass or a plastic sheet, with a homemade fabric and yarn frame. **—ANDREW H.**



How crazy would it be if a giant human hand appeared in the game?



FANDOM

Peachy Pointillism

It's Princess Peach—in bottle-cap form!

WHEN SEAN KEPLINGER of Cincinnati, OH, asked his wife and kids to save up their plastic-soda-bottle caps, he didn't tell them what he planned to use them for. As their collection grew, so did his family's curiosity over the secret project. It wasn't until he had hand-painted hundreds of bottle caps and began laying them out that his crafty vision—this Princess Peach mural—came into focus.

"I recruited my kids to help with the initial layout of the image," writes Keplinger on the website documenting the creative process (www.instructables.com/id/Princess-Peach-Pointillism/). "I had them start with the black caps and asked them to guess what the picture was. Halfway through the process, my fourth daughter shouted out, Peach!"

Designed using a technique called pointillism, the mural took about six months of creative time and used 980 bottle caps, which Keplinger washed and painted himself. The final image is three feet wide and four feet tall. "Overall, I'm pretty happy with the result," he says modestly.

—NATHAN M.

CORRECTION: In Vol. 261, we identified Ray Rizzo as the first North American Pokémon Video Game World Champion. Rizzo is actually the *second* North American to hold the title. The first was Jeremiah Fan in 2009.

NINTENDO POWER®

GET THE BEST AND MOST NINTENDO COVERAGE DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR!

NEW ZELDA! Drive a train and command enemies in The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks for Nintendo DS!
NINTENDO POWER
RED STEEL 2
FINALLY, wielding a sword in a Wii game feels as real as you'd always dreamed!
MARIO & SONIC TOGETHER AGAIN! The dynamic duo re-team for the Olympic Winter Games on Wii and DS
PUNCH-OUT!! BLOWOUT
Punch-Out!!
Wii
RESIDENT EVIL RETURNS TO Wii
BOOM BLOX: BASH PARTY
FIRE EMBLEM: SHADOW DRAGON
MARIO & LUIGI RPG 3
SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: DEVIL SURVIVOR
SONIC AND THE BLACK KNIGHT
DEFENDING THE TITLE
AGENTS of CHANGE
Future

Check out NintendoPower.com for a sneak peek at the latest issue!

You can also subscribe, renew or give a gift at the click of a button!

SUBSCRIBE NOW – 12 ISSUES FOR ONLY $19.95

THAT'S 72% SAVINGS!

visit www.nintendopower.com/replynow

Game trademarks and copyrights are properties of their respective owners. Nintendo properties are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2009 Nintendo.
]

The wrestling superstars of today and the legends of yesteryear collide in WWE All Stars, the craziest, wildest grappling game we've ever seen on a Nintendo system! Be here next month to check it out (along with much more)—if you smell what NP is cookin'.

FEBRUARY 2011 VOL. 264

NEXT MONTH

NINTENDO POWER (ISSN 1041-9551) is published 13 times a year, monthly plus Holiday issue following December issue. Future US, Inc., 4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. Phone: (650) 872-1642. Fax (650) 872-2207. Website: www.futureus.com. Periodicals postage paid in South San Francisco, CA and at additional mailing offices. Newsstand distribution is handled by Time Warner Retail. Subscriptions: One year basic rate (12 issues: U.S.:$24.95. Canada: $29.95. Canadian price includes postage and GST (GST #R128220688). Subscriptions do not include newsstand only specials. **POSTMASTER**: Send changes of address to: Nintendo Power, PO Box 5770, Harlan, IA 51593-1270. Standard Mail Enclosure in the following edition: None. Ride-Along Enclosure: none. Canada Post PMA #40612608. Returns: Bleuchip International, PO Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2, Canada. Future US, Inc. also publishes Guitar World, Mac|Life, Maximum PC, PC Gamer, PlayStation: The Official Magazine, Pregnancy, Revolver, Windows: The Official Magazine, The Official Xbox Magazine and others.
Entire contents copyright 2010 Future US, Inc. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. Reproduction on the Internet of the articles and pictures in this magazine is illegal without the prior written consent of Nintendo Power. Products named in the pages of Nintendo Power are trademarks of their respective companies. Future US, Inc. is not affiliated with the companies or products advertised or covered in Nintendo Power.

CUSTOMER SERVICE: Nintendo Power Customer Care, PO Box 5770, Harlan, IA 51593-1270. Phone: 1-866-941-8368. Web: www.nintendopower.com/customerservice. Email: nintendopower@cdsfulfillment.com. Back issues can be purchased by calling 1-800-865-7240. REPRINTS: Reprint Management Service. Phone: 717-399-1900 ext. 100.

GAMEFLY.COM

Over 7,000 Titles • No Late Fees • Free Shipping

VIDEO GAME RENTALS

DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR

Wii
Disney
EPIC MICKEY
Wii
NARUTO SHIPPUDEN
Dragon Blade
TOMY
Wii
DONKEY KONG COUNTRY RETURNS
Nintendo
NINTENDO DS
Golden Sun
DARK DAWN

Our Lowest Price Ever!

Start Now for Only $5.95

Go to www.gamefly.com

© 2011 GameFly, Inc. GAMEFLY and the GF Logo are trademarks of GameFly, Inc. All other marks used under license by their respective owners. Unless you cancel your account, your credit card will be charged for the price of your game plan at the end of your free trial. You must be 18 years of age or older and reside inside the 50 United States to use the GameFly service.

ENORMOUS

COLORFUL

EXCITING

SUPERSONIC

ANGRY

ELECTRIFIED

UNDEAD

INVINCIBLE

INSANE

SHINY

Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection
Super Scribblenauts
Create Anything. Solve Everything.
NINTENDO DS
EVERYONE 10+
ESRB
Online Interactions Not Rated by the ESRB
WB GAMES

NINTENDO DS™

THINK IT. WRITE IT. SOLVE IT.

5TH CELL Advancing Entertainment™

WB GAMES

EVERYONE 10+ ™
E 10+
Cartoon Violence
Comic Mischief
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

SUPER SCRIBBLENAUTS software © 2010 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. Developed by 5th Cell Media LLC. Nintendo DS is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2006 Nintendo. All other trademarks and copyrights are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved.

SUPER SCRIBBLENAUTS and all related characters and elements are trademarks of and © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
WB GAMES LOGO, WB SHIELD: ™ & © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
(s10)

SuperScribblenauts.com

Made with love by

RetroMags

Our goal is to preserve classic video game magazines so that they are not lost permanently.

People interested in helping out in any capacity,
please visit us at retromags.com.

No profit is made from these scans, nor do we offer anything available from the publishers themselves.

If you come across anyone selling releases from
this site, please do not support them and do let us know.

Thank you!